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MRS. LEFFINGWELL'S BOOTS

A Farcical Comedy in Three Acts

BY

AUGUSTUS THOMAS

Revised 1916 by AUGUSTUS THOMAS

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NEW YORK
SAMUEL FRENCH
PUBLISHER
28-30 WEST 38TH STREET

LONDON
SAMUEL FRENCH, Ltd.
26 SOUTHAMPTON STREET
STRAND

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Act of March 4, 1909.

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PREFACE.

This preface is the third of a projected series of six, so planned that each should set forth such difficulties as their respective plays had presented in the making, and the manner in which these difficulties had been surmounted or accommodated.

The one immediately preceding this, in the order of its writing, was for the play, "In Mizzoura." When the typed copy came back from the typists I showed it to my secretary at the Empire Theatre, not in the spirit in which Moliere is reported to have read to his cook—for my secretary is a Yale man and treads with fear in literary paths where I rush in—but with an humble and dissembled yearning for his approval. I asked him if he didn't think my confessions of hurdles and slow going might encourage younger writers shinning similar obstacles. He answered, that on the contrary, the preface seemed discouraging, as it laid such stress upon the experiences from which it had been drawn, and thereby implied that to write plays at all, a writer must first have lived considerably.

That opinion made me doubly thoughtful as I approached this play until a second review of the material reminded me of the trivial character of the experiences and satisfied me that every person must have souvenirs quite as important.

"Mrs. Leffingwell's Boots" was salvage; that is to say, it was the marketing of odds and ends and remnants, utterly useless for any other purpose. Let me briefly sketch a few of them:

With the royalties of "Alabama" I had built a house and was trying to make a home in New Rochelle. It was on a hill on four acres of cow

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pasture, treeless except for one gnarly apple; but it commanded a fair view of the sound a mile distant, and Long Island nine miles across the water. Twenty-six years have enriched the grounds with many noble trees and shrubs and covered the building's first story, which is of stone, so densely with vines that it might just as well have been of shingles and saved that mortgage.

Deaf to the expostulations of a local carpenter, I had a hole eighteen inches square cut in the dining room table, and had this aperture fitted with a copper pan that caught the drip from a tiny fountain that played over stones and ferns when we had visitors, or felt recurrently sentimental ourselves. It was a perfect little fountain regulated under the table by a key which no man ought to expect a woman to reach, and it worked satisfactorily nine times out of ten, or until a bit of dirt, or some aquatic insect got into its pin-hole nozzle. Then it spurted eccentrically and was a regular fool thing.

One night Francis Wilson had the attention of the company and was telling a good story, when the fountain took one of these fits. The stream struck fair and square on the stiff bosom of his dress shirt and made a noise like rain on a roof. Company table cloths are long, and before I could get under and find the key, a good deal of water went Mr. Wilson's way, but it didn't interrupt his story. He turned up his lapels like a sailor man on the bridge, and held his place.

We abandoned the fountain soon after that, but the Francis Wilson episode always impressed persons humorously when we told it, to explain the patch on the table where the copper pan had been—and one gentle visitor said, "Mr. Thomas, you ought to put that in a play".

There used to be a market just east of the old Grand Central station, where on a day's notice one could get freshly cooked terrapin in glass jars; and

a commuter, with a silk thread on his little finger, could remember to bring out three jars. Now grape fruit, and consomme en tasse, and terrapin, and a rack of lamb, and jumbo squabs, with a sliver of Virginia ham, and alligator pears, and ice cream molded zoologically, plus Turkish coffee, a good cigar and vintage Ruinart make an acceptable dinner. If the laundress will help in the kitchen, and the upstairs maid will assist in the pantry, with an emergency butler from the social service bureau, you can do nicely for a party of twelve.

There was a blizzard. All our guests, except one lady, were expected from New York. That one lady arrived at nine P. M. in the arms of her coachman. The coupe was in a drift sillhouetted against Long Island. The New York people reported by telephone two days later when the lines were repaired.

As we faced the flowers and salted almonds and the remaining two hundred and seventy degrees of the vacant circle the solitary guest seated at my right said to Mrs. Thomas, on my left—"If you were to put this on the stage, nobody would believe it".

In the summer of 1903, Henri Dumay, the French dramatist, was visiting me at East Hampton; and talking of dinner parties one evening I told him of our blizzard dinner ten years before. It was upon his banter that no playwright could make more than one act of it; and the encouragement of Mark Twain's statement; "A short story is a novel in the cradle", that I began at once to write "Mrs. Leffingwell's Boots".

There was at East Hampton an empty box stall in the stable with windows set so high that one couldn't look out of them. I put in only a kitchen chair and a small pine table from the village general store—not even a calendar to distract attention. My play material to start with was a suburban home—isolated by a storm on the evening of a prepared

dinner. Persons once there couldn't easily leave; and only the sturdy and the heroic could arrive. Question:—what is the best use to make of that set of conditions? Answer: the exploitation of a person or of persons who would like to get away and can't do so. What person would be the most effective figure under such constraint? A girl!

I began to picture a storm-bound girl in this suburban house. I made her a guest for whom the ill-fated dinner party was arranged. I gave her youth, and beauty, and all the simple charms I could imagine; and with her thus endowed I made myself see her still fretting to get away; and I asked myself and the walls of the box stall why? My first problem was to devise a reason for her uneasiness.

I press this banality with some insistence upon your attention because it illustrates one way in which a story is made to begin itself: Just one positively chosen effect or result inflexibly adhered to, and turned in every direction in search of its most probable and most prolific cause. And this cause when found, written down in its proper relation and singly or in combination regarded in its turn as an effect for which a remoter cause must be discovered.

In this instance the best reason for my storm-bound girl's uneasiness seemed to be her wish to avoid meeting a particular man. Her very opposition made the man important; and I began to inquire why—opposition? Who is he that she doesn't want to meet him? What is he—especially to her? It was easy to say a bad man; and easier still, if a very bad man, to hand him over to the police, but that looked like drama, and not comedy—so I "about faced" and thought of him as a good man, all right, fine, and in every way admirable—so admirable, that she had once loved him; yes still loved him, but yet wished to escape him.

And so on, step by step; the best stone in the stream chosen for each next foothold until I had

Corbin my young architect, whose engagement to her, Mabel had broken, because of his notorious relations with another man's wife, and still had him really innocent and eligible. The only evidences against him were a detective—to be ultimately discredited; a jealous and outraged husband—to be later mollified; and a pair of lady's boots on his fire escape—to be later accounted for and explained away. With this broken engagement and this notoriety, Corbin would of course not be one of the expected guests; so, I had the storm drive him into the house; not for shelter but to telephone; and then the match making hostess detained him.

The next most interesting person in that vague complication, and the most undesirable in that house, would be the married woman, about whom there had been the trouble; the owner of the boots and of the jealous husband. I called her Mrs. Leffingwell. There is an avenue of that name in St. Louis, near the hill where I used to report railroad strikes, and the name always seemed gay and frivolous to me. I made Mrs. Leffingwell the only invited guest who arrived; and in my own New Rochelle experience I had the "business" of her arrival all ready for transcription.

With the young man Corbin in the house from which there was no escape; and also with him, his estranged sweetheart, and the married woman of whom she was jealous, I had the nucleus of a farcical comedy. In constructing such plays the French have the three act formula expressed by one of their modern writers:

Act one; get your man up a tree:
Act two; throw stones at him:
Act three; get him down.

I had my man up a tree. My work was to find stones to throw at him. Obviously one missile would be the girl's suspicion, and her anger when she discovered that the solitary lady guest was the woman

of the scandal. To have any discovery at all required a preceding mystery; that is to say, the woman of the scandal must be anonymous and she and Corbin must affect to be strangers when they first meet in the play. Corbin's reason for that concealment could be the presence of the jealous sweetheart; the woman's reason could be her promise to a jealous husband to avoid the man. A second stone to throw at the man in the tree was thus obviously the jealous husband himself; and the playwright's problem at this stage of the story's construction was to devise situations involving Corbin and the woman, which would look suspicious to the sweetheart and to the husband; as for example, to put Corbin on the stage in his pajamas and in hazardous nearness to Mrs. Leffingwell also in unconventional attire; and to do this decently and without incidents shocking to gentle patrons. The lounge bed improvised in the living room was one bit of machinery to such an end. The sweetheart's and the woman's rooms nearby were another. The telephone calls at midnight were a third and served the double purpose of calling in the ladies and of bringing the jealous husband into that part of the story.

At this stage of the progress there arose one of those pine knot difficulties in the logic of story building that invariably or almost invariably are to be met and resolved. As another stone to throw at my treed hero I wanted the presence of his real accuser, the crooked detective who had manufactured evidence against Mrs. Leffingwell and against Corbin; or at least I thought I wanted him, and I began mentally to investigate him. Up to this point he had been a vague factor merely predicated in the construction. His charge was hearsay. His confutation, as arranged, was merely the innocent hero's denial. He was unquestionably a weak link in the chain of circumstances. He must be flesh and blood. His motive must answer logical inquiry. Merely a

venal officer inventing a false accusation against two entirely innocent persons was too contrived. To have him manufacture evidence at the husband's command would destroy the husband as a genuine factor. Problem: find a better motive for the detective than money. Then slowly the mental search touches these high lights, not in such close succession as I give them here, but after elimination in this selected order: Hatred? An old enmity? Hatred between equals? Social equals? An insane hatred? A demented detective?—Pause!——

Why not give that idea some hospitality? To plant a good lady's boots where they would compromise a man is a bit freakish at best and might be the act of an eccentric. But if the planter is of unsound mind why does not some person know it—and knowing it why not say so and prevent the play? How could Corbin know it and be silent? Why suffer from the man's eccentricity and be still? Is he some relative of Corbin's whom Corbin would wish to shield? What of that? Let him be even a brother and Corbin should expose him to Mabel. Why permit the sweetheart to suffer by Corbin sparing a member of his family? Even her own brother—Now wait a minute——

Mabel's brother? That sounds pretty good. There's pull in that idea and there's a "come back" and a kick. So there again is an example of one of those solvents that the dramatist so often finds about two-thirds of the way through his story in process: A girl's brother not of sound mind and with a real or fancied grievance against her lover doing things to annoy, embarrass, compromise and even incriminate the lover, and the lover being silent—out of consideration for the girl, as Romeo refused to fight a kinsman of Juliet.

I was immensely satisfied with the find; and quit work for that day on which I had made it. A vital factor, a new cog changing completely the gear of

your dramatic machinery needs a night of sub-conscious assimilation at least.

The next morning the boomerang element in the new feature was operating—my girl wasn't happy with a strain of mental unsoundness in the family, and I couldn't blame her. The sentimental part of my confection was getting very unlovely—but as mere machinery I hated to dismiss the idea; and then I remembered Doctor Still, the founder of osteopathy, and an incident in his practice—a man insane not congenitally, but from an injury; and a cure effected by a readjusted vertebra.

Useful! That necessitated a practitioner of osteopathy in the play and enough exposition of the tenets of the school to make the use of them real. Doctor Rumsey, his deafness and his skill came into the plot that way. Some wise critics attributed it all to " Thomas' susceptibility to fads ", not knowing that like Romeo's apothecary, " My poverty and not my will consented."

I began to consider the doctor's exposition of this brother's case. I saw the unconvincing quality of mere talk about it. " Don't tell it—Do it." That is the sturdy motto of the theatre. I needed a figure for my demonstration—a lay figure. The mind jumped to a manikin. When I had the art department on the old *St. Louis Republican* I used to infest the studios of the local artists. More than once I had been comically startled by walking into a manikin standing back of a door or discovered elsewhere unawares; and the idea of a manikin lip up a whole field of associated subjects. It gave me a studio to play with instead of a living room. It gave me a gallery, with doors to bed rooms above, and door ways to hall and dining room below. It gave me a stairway and landing; all so dear to the weaver of farce fabric; and better yet it gave me this life like figure, potent not only for demonstrations, but for substitutions and mistakes. I think now, that if

the manikin had not walked into my mind M. Dumay might have won his wager and "The Boots" have been only a one act play.

A dramatist writing helpfully to beginners in his craft cannot point too often to the value of the delayed ingredient of this kind. Like a bit of soluble and vivid colored pigment floated on an already compounded fluid, it not only adds its own individual local color spot, but particles drift from it and affect the motley of whole compound.

As you read the play you will see how completely the idea of an artist and his studio changed the chemistry of the story; how utterly different it would all have had to be without the manikin, and the studio, and the double deck, and with only the arrangement of the usual suburban house.

From this point onward the making of the play was as simple as re-assembling a picture puzzle and when once together and the picture was complete, it remained only to tell about it which is the easiest part of the business.

Augustus Thomas.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL'S BOOTS.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY.

IN THE ORDER OF THEIR APPEARANCE.

Cast of characters in Mr. Charles Froman's production, New York.

MRS. THOMAS BONNER.....*Dorothy Hammond*
MRS. RUMSEY.....*Annie Adams*
DOCTOR HENRY RUMSEY.....*John G. Saville*
NORA..*A maid*.....*Jessie Busley*
ORTON..*A butler*.....*Ernest Lawford*
MISS MABEL AINSLIE.....*Fay Davis*
MR. WALTER CORBIN.....*Wm. Courtenay*
MR. HOWARD LEFFINGWELL.....*Louis Payne*
MR. RICHARD AINSLIE.....*Vincent Serrano*
MRS. LEFFINGWELL.....*Margaret Illington*
TIM..*A coachman*.....*Geo. Farnesgaines*
MR. THOMAS BONNER..*Artist*.....*Jack Barnes*
A DRIVER.....*Jay Wilson*
SERGEANT OF POLICE.....*Del de Lewis*

MRS. LEFFINGWELL'S BOOTS

ACT I.

SCENE:—*The dining room of* "INGLENOOK." Big *arch at right letting to big studio—similar arch left to enclosed porch used as conservatory and filled with plants on rising benches. Exterior door from porch up stage. Doors in back flat up left to pantry; up* R. *to hall. Big window with seat* I L. *Big Normandie buffet between doors, at back. Fireplace and mantel in* L. *upper corner obliqued—mantel is surmounted by cattle painting, built in. All doors surmounted by shelves, fitted with brass and china plaques. Wall spaces artistically hung with plates. Color scheme is blue and white. Buffet richly equipped with glass and liquors. A round table with covers for ten is in the center. Chairs of mahogany are in their places. Flowers and candles are on table.*

A little fountain plays at center of table. Fire in fireplace.

Drifting snow at window and porch.

DISCOVERED:—MRS. BONNER, *and her mother, and father,* DR. *and* MRS. RUMSEY. (MRS. BONNER *is in party dress.* DOCTOR *and wife in ordinary attire. All are standing.*)

MRS. BONNER. (*With dinner cards; and perturbed*) I *always* make a diagram of my table and then find it's all wrong.

MOTHER. What's wrong now?

MRS. BONNER. (*Indicates places*) Why I had Mr. Klargess on Mrs. Leffingwell's right—and as our principal guest she's on *Tom's* right. That makes her between them.

MOTHER. Well?

MRS. BONNER. Well if Tom's going to continue to act ugly about Mr. Klargess to-night, Mrs. Leffingwell's sure to notice it, if she's between them, and it'd be all over Larchmont to-morrow that Tom was jealous of Klargess.

MOTHER. (*At* R. *of table*) Who's here? (*Scans card*) Mr. Reed? Why don't you change *him* and put Mr. Klargess *here?*

MRS. BONNER. That's immediately next to *me*—even more irritating to Tom.

DOCTOR. (*In slightly deaf manner*) What's that?

MOTHER. (*Raising her voice*) Nothing, Henry—I'll explain upstairs.

MRS. BONNER. Tell me, dear—you understand perfectly why I don't have you both to dinner?

MOTHER. Why certainly, daughter—I'd rather take a whipping than come down to it anyway—and really not hearing very well—your father doesn't enjoy company at all.

DOCTOR. (*Feeling referred to*) Eh? What—?

MRS. BONNER. And you wouldn't believe the expense of it, Daddy, if I told you.

DOCTOR. (*With some experience*) Oh——

MRS. BONNER. No you wouldn't—Fillet—just one fillet larded-four dollars. (DOCTOR *looks at wife*) Squabs—skinny little squabs—nothing else in the market:—Six dollars a dozen—then nobody gives a *lot* of wines any more; you begin with champagne and serve champagne all thro' the dinner—well you see *don't* you? we can't do it *often*—so when we do *do* it every plate counts——

DOCTOR. Why bless you, my dear, I know that.

MRS. BONNER. (*Affectionately*) So you understand, don't you, why I *consent,* even *consent* to mother and you eating with the children?

DOCTOR. (*Reassuring her*) Perfectly.

MRS. BONNER. The butler fills my glass *once,* just once and it stands thro' the evening—Tom pretends that champagne makes him nervous, and he has a long Scotch and soda—even that leaves eight to pour for. I tell you they make it serious for you.

DOCTOR. (*Indicating table*) All these people buy pictures.

MRS. BONNER. Most of them—we *hope.* Of course Mr. Klargess—I invited *him* on Mabel's account.

DOCTOR. Whose account?

MRS. BONNER. (*To her mother*) I'll explain to him and you can listen. (*To* DOCTOR, *in slightly lifted voice*) This dinner, father——

DOCTOR. (*Admiring table, smiles*) Beautiful—I remember a dinner Governor Fletcher gave Jennie Lind——

MRS. BONNER. No—I'm explaining—listen. Do you hear me in this tone?

DOCTOR. *Half* the volume, my dear—if you'd only pitch it in a lower key. It's the slow vibrations that carry—All the trans-Atlantic steamers——

MRS. BONNER. (*More contralto*) I remember. Well *this* tone then?

DOCTOR. Exactly—if a woman'll only talk contralto I——

MOTHER. Pity you didn't *marry* a contralto.

MRS. BONNER. Wait, mother.

DOCTOR. (*Apologetically, shakes head and smiles the patient smile of the gentle deaf*) Didn't get it.

MRS. BONNER. Didn't miss much—I've told mother about the dinner and I want you to understand: (DOCTOR *nods attention*) It isn't any fun for *us*—Tom and me—but if Tom's going to sell pictures he's got to meet the people that *buy*

pictures—I hate the whole society idea myslf—This dinner is just to pay a lot of social debts—understand?

DOCTOR. Perfectly.

MRS. BONNER. (*Cautiously, and looking toward door* R.) Mabel's—Miss Ainslie—her people think she's going into a decline about Walter Corbin.

MOTHER. Really?

MRS. BONNER. Oh, yes—my inviting her here this winter was a regularly arranged thing between her mother and me. That's why I asked Mr. Klargess to this dinner to-night and if Tom wasn't an idiot he'd know it—but every time I say "Klargess," Tom behaves this way—I don't care that (*A snap of her fingers*) for Mr. Klargess—I wouldn't send flowers to-morrow if I read his funeral notice—but he's as jolly as he can be and I've put Mabel next to him. If anybody can get her mind off of Corbin—*he* can. What time is it, Daddy?

DOCTOR. What?

MOTHER. (*Impatiently*) *Time.* (*Pantomimes drawing watch*)

DOCTOR. (*Smilingly obeys*) Oh—fifteen minutes after seven.

MRS. BONNER. (*Consternation*) What! Tom ought to be in the house, *now,* dressing.

(*Enter* NORA *from pantry up* L.)

NORA. Beg pardon, ma'am.

MRS. BONNER. What is it, Nora?

NORA. That *man* you've *hired* for to-night——

MRS. BONNER. Call him the butler, Nora——

NORA. Yes, ma'am. He wants to know if there's cocktails.

MRS. BONNER. Tell him I'll speak with him here.

NORA. Yes, ma'am. (*Exit*)

MOTHER. Is he a regular butler?

MRS. BONNER. (*Proudly*) Oh, yes, from the city. He won't come, if there isn't a pantry and he stipulates he isn't to go *into* the kitchen.

MOTHER. (*Astonished*) 'Mm.

(*Enter* BUTLER, *up* L. *He is very English, and tolerant.*)

BUTLER. Yes, ma'am?

MRS. BONNER. What's your name—James, I think they told me.

BUTLER. Yes, ma'am, James; but most houses prefer to call me by my last name, ma'am.

MRS. BONNER. Yes? What is that?

BUTLER. Orton.

MRS. BONNER. Orton—O–R–T–O–N?

BUTLER. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. BONNER. I think I can remember that.

BUTLER. Same as Horton's Ice cream only droppin' the H. That's a good way.

MRS. BONNER. Thank you. What was it you wished to know?

BUTLER. Are there cocktails?

MRS. BONNER. (*Anxiously*) What do you think yourself?

BUTLER. (*Showing one tooth; but too languid to smile further*) Depends on the guests, ma'am. If the guests are pretty free drinkers—*we* generally *say* cocktails. They're a great saving of champagne.

MRS. BONNER. Well—that doesn't matter; but they do start everything good naturedly.

BUTLER. Yes, ma'am. (*Pause. A slight inclination toward right*) Pass them in the parlor, of course?

MRS. BONNER. The studio—yes—we don't have a parlor in this house. (BUTLER *nods; he is about to drift out*) And Orton——

BUTLER. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. BONNER. The maid showed you the *two kinds* of champagne?

BUTLER. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. BONNER. After the second round—pour the American.

BUTLER. (*Easily*) I understand ma'am—with the napkin over the label.

(*Enter* NORA.)

NORA. Is it time for the candles, Mrs. Bonner?

BUTLER. (*Unmistakably to* MRS. BONNER) When I'm passing the cocktails I should think.

MRS. BONNER. (*Assenting*) Yes. (*Relays message to* MAID) When Orton passes the cocktails.

NORA. Very well; and the fountain?

MRS. BONNER. We'd better arrange that now. This fountain Orton plays thro' the dinner. There's a little key to turn it on by under the table near the floor.

ORTON. A key?

NORA. (*Noting his reluctance*) I'll do it.

MRS. BONNER. Thank you, Nora.

(NORA *goes under table removing chair to do so.*)

BUTLER. (*Very bored*) I don't have to attend to that during the dinner?

MRS. BONNER. Oh, no—it runs itself after it's turned on. (*To* NORA) A little higher, Nora.

(*Exit* BUTLER.)

NORA. There?

MRS. BONNER. Oh, no—that's too much. (*A bell rings in the pantry*) There, that's better—leave it there.

NORA. Yes, ma'am.

(*Enter* BUTLER.)

BUTLER. You ring, ma'am?

NORA. That was me. I put my hand on the button, ma'am, (*Reappears*)

MRS. BONNER. Oh, I forgot that button. (*Sits in her place as hostess*) I don't think I can reach it with this big top on the table. (*Sweeps wildly with foot*)

NORA. (*Observing*) It's further, ma'am, (*Bell rings*)

MRS. BONNER. But I can't do that at the *dinner* —we've a hand wire somewhere.

BUTLER. You'll hardly need a bell, ma'am. The butler "comes in" often enough.

MRS. BONNER. Thank you.

BUTLER. Will you have the cheese *with* the salad ma'am, or by itself?

MRS. BONNER. (*Ponderously*) Oh—I think together.

BUTLER. Yes, ma'am. (*Exit* 3 L.)

MRS. BONNER. I wish you'd look in the stable, Nora, and see if *Mister* Bonner is there.

NORA. (*With surprise*) In the stable, ma'am?

MRS. BONNER. Yes—(NORA *exit* 3 L. *To mother*) Once Tom pretended to go to New York but only hid himself in the stable instead.

DOCTOR. (*Referring to fountain*) That's *very* pretty. Why don't we have that at all the meals?

MRS. BONNER. We didn't like to cut the table. It's only the big pine top (*To mother*) and then it takes two table clothes every time you see—or cut *them.*

MOTHER. It's very pretty; and most unusual.

MRS. BONNER. It's pretty when it goes all right— but a bug or a piece of dirt makes it sputter and then it's simply sloppy till Tom can get under the table and shut it off. I hope every thing'll go all

right to-night. (*Pause*) What'd he say his name was?—Oh, yes, Orton.

MOTHER. It's sure to go all right—the table is lovely.

MRS. BONNER. It's very much prettier with only the candle light. I want Mabel to see it. (*Calls thro' the arch to the studio*) Mabel! Mabel!

MABEL. (*Off* R.) Yes—you call Eva?

MRS. BONNER. Can you come down and look at the table before the people come?

MABEL. Are you alone?

MRS. BONNER. Yes, alone. (*Returns*) This is the first party of any kind Mabel's had since her break with Walter Corbin.

DOCTOR. Didn't get that.

MOTHER. (*By care, and by pantomime*) Her first party—since her trouble.

DOCTOR. Trouble?—You mean about her brother Dick being so queer. (*Taps head*)

MOTHER. Corbin—C–O–R–B–I–N. (*Spells it in conjugal whisper*)

DOCTOR. (*Smiling*) Oh, yes. Found a lady's boots on his fire escape didn't they?

MRS. BONNER. (*Wig-wagging* MABEL'S *approach*) Sh——

DOCTOR. (*Unctuously*) Ever hear who that woman was?—eh?

MOTHER. Be still.

(*Enter* MABEL, R.)

MRS. BONNER. I wanted you to see the table, dear.

DOCTOR. (*Bringing up his average*) Why, Mabel, you look as sweet as a peach.

MABEL. Thank you. (*To* MRS. BONNER *over her shoulder as she backs up*) I couldn't reach those three hooks in the middle—will you do them?

MOTHER. Here—let me. (*Fastens* MABEL'S *dress*)

MRS. BONNER. (*Self-accusingly*) I forgot to send Nora to you.

MABEL. Doesn't matter.

MRS. BONNER. (*Indicating table*) Your flowers, dear—came in beautifully.

DOCTOR. (*To wife and* MABEL) Anything I can do? Used to be a great operator.

MOTHER. Go 'way.

MABEL. And that beautiful fountain. How artistic!

MRS. BONNER. Tom's idea.

MABEL. Has Tom come back?

MRS. BONNER. No!

MABEL. He will of course—but the snow *is* something terrible.

MRS. BONNER. I know—I expect everybody'll be late. The cook didn't think we ought to go ahead with the dinner.

MABEL. Nobody sent any excuses?

MRS. BONNER. Oh, no.

MABEL. Then of course they'll all come.

DOCTOR. Isn't that somebody at the porch door?

MRS. BONNER. (*Looking* L.) Why I think it is. (*Calls*) Nora!

DOCTOR. I'll let him in. (*Exit* L.)

MABEL. Strangers don't come that way, do they?

MRS. BONNER. No—Tom of course. Don't say a word about Klargess—Tom mustn't think I've told.

MABEL. Of course not. (MOTHER *shakes head*) I'm going upstairs until dinner, anyway. (*Exit* R.)

DOCTOR. (*Off* L. *In cheery tones*) Why come in—come in, sir. Regular Santa Claus weather you're fetching us.

CORBIN. (*Outside*) It's a blizzard. Is Mr. Bonner in?

DOCTOR. No, sir. But Mrs. Bonner is here.

CORBIN. (*Outside*) How are you, Doctor? (*We hear him stamping the snow from his boots*)

DOCTOR. Why, Mr. Corbin, we were just speaking of *you.*

MRS. BONNER. (*In surprise*) It's Walter Corbin.

MOTHER. I'll get out. (*Exit* R., *with domestic dispatch*)

DOCTOR. Talk about telepathy.

CORBIN. (*Off* L.) Good-evening, Mrs. Bonner—I just stopped in to use your telephone.

DOCTOR. (*Appearing*) The drift at that door is fully three feet.

CORBIN. (*Appearing in high rubber boots, and with reefer*)

MRS. BONNER. Why, what a surprise!

CORBIN. (*Sees table, stops*) Oh—there's a party—excuse me.

MRS. BONNER. But nobody here yet.

CORBIN. They'll all be late, I'm sure. I *walked* over to a building I'm doing on the water front. Been two hours getting *here.* Thought you wouldn't mind my using your 'phone to get a rig from the station.

MRS. BONNER. Of course not. (CORBIN *crosses toward 'phone which is on the wall just inside the arch to the studio*) But why—(CORBIN *stops*) Oh, dear, I wish I'd known you were in New York. (*Flutters*)

CORBIN. (*Laughing*) Thank you. (*Goes to 'phone* 1 R.)

(MRS. BONNER *turns to* DOCTOR.)

DOCTOR. (*Indicating door and referring to* MABEL) Don't they speak to each other?

MRS. BONNER. (*Near fireplace*) Sh——

CORBIN. (*Off*) Give me 314 please—Kerwin's drug store.

DOCTOR. I say don't they——

MRS. BONNER. (*In undertone*) I hear you—and so can he. Be still, please.

CORBIN. (*Off*) Is this Kerwin?—(*Pause*) well, won't you see if there's a depot wagon there and ask him to call for Mr. Corbin at—(*Pause*) What? (*Pause*) None at all! well, say wait a minute!—Don't you think one'll come along? (*Pause*) What's that?

DOCTOR. (*Pause*) Telephoning?

MRS. BONNER. (*Impatiently*) Yes.

DOCTOR. (*Glancing at the cards*) Did you expect *him?*

MRS. BONNER. (*Hushing him*) No—no.

CORBIN. Well look here—the stable's near you isn't it? Well can't your boy—(*Pause*) Nobody at all? Well, ring off, please, I'll talk to the stable myself.

(*Enter* BUTLER *from pantry.*)

BUTLER. (*Female whoop, way off as he opens door*) Please, ma'am, the cook says will the Doctor kindly look at the maid's ear—she got stuck in a snow drift on her way to the stable and we think it's a bit frozen.

MRS. BONNER. Why dear me! Father, please go to Nora—in the kitchen.

DOCTOR. (*To* BUTLER) What is it?

BUTLER. (*Beckoning*) The maid, sir—(DOCTOR *joins him*) I gave her two cocktails, (NORA *whoops off*) and she's a bit cheery, ma'am. (*Exit* DOCTOR *quickly*) But maybe with an *old* gentleman—(*Exit after* DOCTOR)

CORBIN. Well, ring me up when you get them, please. (MRS. BONNER *goes anxiously toward pantry. Enter* CORBIN) Depot wagons seem to be in demand.

MRS. BONNER. You couldn't get one?

CORBIN. Not yet——

MRS. BONNER. But why must you go?

CORBIN. Oh—I've an appointment—in New York.

MRS. BONNER. Can't you telegraph.

CORBIN. (*Declining*) Oh, no, really

MRS. BONNER. (*Pause—impressively*) Walter! —Mabel Ainslee's here.

CORBIN. (*Earnestly*) Mabel.

MRS. BONNER. Yes.

CORBIN. Then—why then of course I can't stay —you know, don't you?

MRS. BONNER. No—I *don't* know and *nobody* knows. It just seems too foolish of you both.

CORBIN. It's my fault, may be. I said I'd explain—and—but then—you know—well I'd rather not *talk* about it if you don't mind.

MRS. BONNER. Why should you talk about it with me? But I think if you only got together yourselves—and to-night when everybody else has gone——

CORBIN. No really—thank you, Mrs. Bonner, very much—it'd be rather taking advantage of—of *her* don't you see? (*Telephone rings*) Excuse me—(*Exit*)

MRS. BONNER. (*Earnestly calling after him*) Now think twice—don't order that wagon.

CORBIN. (*Off*) Yes—yes Mr. Bonner's house—(*Pause*) Why, hello, Jim—this is Walt—Walter Corbin—(*Pause*) No—no—not at all—knew nothing about it—just blundered in, to use the telephone —Mrs. Bonner's right here, speak to her yourself—where are you? club? Yacht club? (*Speaks*) Mrs. Bonner—Mr. Klargess. (MRS. BONNER *disappears and* CORBIN *appears*)

MRS. BONNER. (*Off*) Good-evening, Mr. Klargess—(*Pause*) Yes, isn't it awful—(*Pause*) Oh—now don't say that—your valise came at four o'clock; and your things are all laid out in father's room and—(*Long pause*)

CORBIN. (*In low tone, urgently*) Ask him if there's a cab or wagon there at the club.

MRS. BONNER. You must—you really must—It makes a vacant place beside the loveliest girl you ever saw—(*Pause*) What? (*Pause*) I *have* asked him—he says he must go to New York—What? Wait a minute. (*Speaks running into dining room and holding to the receiver*) Mr. Klargess says you can't *get* to New York to-night.

CORBIN. Nonsense—He's in some game at the club there.

MRS. BONNER. (*Off*) Mr. Corbin says you're playing bridge and don't wish to come. What? (*Pause*) Wait a minute. (*Speaks as before*) He says you really can't get *anywhere*—that it's the worst storm since Roscoe Conklin died. Why not stay—think of Mable.

CORBIN. (*Displaying boots and sweater*) But look at me—"The Eau Claire Lumber Co."

MRS. BONNER. Use Mr. Klargess' things. (*Calls*) Wait a minute I'm talking to him. (*Speaks*) And Tom has three suits himself; one pretty good.

CORBIN. Let me speak to Klargess. (*They exchange places*)

MRS. BONNER. And you must stay.

CORBIN. (*At 'phone*) Say, Jim—I'm in a pair of rubber boots and a reefer—what (*Pause*) Well, that's what I wanted to know—thanks old man, I'll send the valise any place you say! (*Pause*) All right, Mendel's then. (*Laugh*) By jove—yes I can *smell* it. (*Pause and laugh*) I wish I had your excuse. Good-bye—(*Speaks*) Mrs. Bonner. (*They exchange again*)

(*Enter* DOCTOR, 3 L.)

DOCTOR. Mother! where's Mrs. Rumsey? (*Crosses to door up* R.) Think of putting hot cloths on a frost bitten ear. (*Exit*)

(*Enter* MRS. BONNER.)

MRS. BONNER. Thank you so much. Do you know where father's room is? You built the house.

CORBIN. Well I don't know it by that name—of course.

MRS. BONNER. I'll take you there. But tell me, do you wish to sit next to Mabel?

CORBIN. Of course—but hadn't you better ask her?

MRS. BONNER. I shall—but anyway that's where I'd had Klargess.

(*Enter* DOCTOR *and* MOTHER *by door up* R. DOCTOR *carries bottle.*)

CORBIN. Good evening, Mrs. Rumsey.

MOTHER. Mr. Corbin. (*They shake hands*) Why? (*Surprise*)

MRS. BONNER. (*Catching* DOCTOR'S *arm*) Father —please take Mr. Corbin to your room and give him Mr. Klargess' clothes—Mr. Klargess isn't coming.

DOCTOR. (*Giving wife the bottle*) Certainly. Here, mother, you apply this to that girl—both ears.

CORBIN. Somebody frost bitten? (*Winces as mother opens bottle*)

MRS. BONNER. The waitress. (*Exit* MOTHER *up* L. *to pantry*) Oh! (*Winces at the odor of the liniment reaches her*)

DOCTOR. This way, Mr. Corbin.

CORBIN. Thank you. (*Exit* R. *with* DOCTOR)

(*Enter* BUTLER *up* L.)

BUTLER. A gentleman in the kitchen, ma'am.

MRS. BONNER. Who?

BUTLER. One of the guests, I think.

(*Enter* LEFFINGWELL *up* L. *He is a chemist-looking person with bald head, heavy red beard, and gold rimmed spectacles. He is heavily wrapped.*)

LEFFINGWELL. Excuse my coming by the back way, Mrs. Bonner.

MRS. BONNER. Why, Mr. Leffingwell——

LEFFINGWELL. But I took the first door.

MRS. BONNER. Is Mrs. Leffingwell with you?

LEFFINGWELL. I'm going to telephone her. I haven't been home, you see.

MRS. BONNER. You haven't?

LEFFINGWELL. No. The trolley stuck and I came this far on a snow plow. You don't mind my using your 'phone? Cora is so nervous. (*Exit* R.)

MRS. BONNER. Not at all.

(Enter MABEL *excitedly and looking back toward studio.*)

MABEL. Eva?——

MRS. BONNER. Mabel?——

MABEL. Some one just crossed the studio; talking with your father!

MRS. BONNER. (*Confirming* MABEL'S *apprehension*) Yes. It's quite *accidental,* dear. He came in to telephone—it's the worst blizzard since Roscoe Conklin died.

LEFFINGWELL. (*At 'phone*) One ninety D, please. No D—fourth letter—A—B—C—D. One ninety.

MABEL. Who's that?

MRS. BONNER. Mr. Leffingwell—he also came in to telephone.

MABEL. But the other *is?*——

MRS. BONNER. Yes! Now don't be silly, Mabel dear, for the credit of all women don't let him see that you're broken up by it; he knows *you're* here.

MABEL. Of course I shan't; but it just spoils the whole evening—doesn't it?

(MRS. BONNER *takes* MABEL *consolingly to fire.*)

LEFFINGWELL (*At the 'phone*) Hello—who is this? (*Pause*) Oh, that you, Katie? (*Pause*) Well this is *Mr.* Leffingwell—you tell *Mrs.* Leffingwell that—(*Pause*) What's that? (*Pause*) Gone *where?* (*Pause*) Oh—(*Pause*) Oh—(*Pause*) When did they leave? (*Pause*) Oh—that's funny; well all right—all right, Katy—I'll be right over. (*Enters*) Cora's on her way here, it seems. (*Smiles*) Likes to give me lessons in punctuality.

MRS. BONNER. Miss Ainslee, may I present Mr. Leffingwell?

(*They bow and speak.*)

LEFFINGWELL. Miss Ainslee—charmed, I'm sure.

(*Enter* DOCTOR.)

DOCTOR. Hello, Mr. Leffingwell—there's a sensible man—no dress suit in weather like this.

LEFFINGWELL. Just going home to put it on. (*Starts* L.)

MRS. BONNER. Take our wagon. (*Tries to ring under table; does so*)

LEFFINGWELL. 'Tisn't five hundred yards across lots.

MRS. BONNER. I'm sure you'll save time by the wagon. (*Enter* BUTLER *up* L. *answering bell*) Tell the coachman to come round with the buggy at once.

BUTLER. Yes ma'am. (*Exit*)

LEFFINGWELL. Really no need of it—Tom's home of course?

MRS. BONNER. No he isn't.

LEFFINGWELL. Well—well!

DOCTOR. He was home at four; but a valise came then belonging to a man Tom doesn't like and whom he didn't know Mrs. Bonner had invited; and Tom went out.

MRS. BONNER. (*After trying to stop* DOCTOR) What do you think of that?—what's your opinion of a jealous husband, Mr. Leffingwell? (*Banters*)

LEFFINGWELL. (*Seriously*) Nothing if there's no cause for it.

MRS. BONNER. Well there's certainly no cause for this.

DOCTOR. (*Chaffing*) I must say Eva set Tom the example.

MRS. BONNER. Father!

DOCTOR. You know Tom made his reputation on the female figure—He did that beautiful ceiling in the Waldorf; you remember. Then he married; and Eva discovered he had to have *live* women for models. Eva's interest in art rapidly progressed from curiosity to disapproval, and finally, nervous prostration.

MRS. BONNER. Why, father, how can you exaggerate in that manner? (*Turns*) Why, Mabel dear—(*Turns to* MABEL. *They go to studio door* R.)

DOCTOR. (*Amiably to* LEFFINGWELL) So *now* Tom goes in for *animals*, Eva isn't a bit jealous of a cow; or a setter dog by a fireplace.

MRS. BONNER. (*Returning*) Tom *prefers* to paint animals.

(MABEL *disappears* R.)

DOCTOR. People don't buy many cow pictures; and Tom used to make thousands of dollars out of a few gauzy ladies over a window—so I tell Eva that if he wants to walk around in the snow because another fellow's valise comes here, it's a very mild kind of criticism after all.

MRS. BONNER. But not at a dinner party—sup-

pose you *are* jealous of a man—what would occur at a dinner party of *ten?*

(*Door bell rings off* R.)

LEFFINGWELL. There are some men one can't be too careful of; and the husband must decide who those men are, Mrs. Bonner. I know a fellow—an architect of great reputation—put a lady—a lady that I happen to know, in the most awkward position—cost her husband a barrel of money to keep her name out of the papers. Dinner of ten? This was in the biggest hotel in Bar Harbor.

MRS. BONNER. (*Interrupting; and fearful for* MABEL) Mr. Leffingwell! (*Then for effect*) Let us go into the studio—everybody—there's a beautiful fire in there. (*Exit*)

LEFFINGWELL. (*Following to door*) What is it?

DOCTOR. Pst—(*Touches* LEFFINGWELL)

LEFFINGWELL. Eh? (*Returns*)

DOCTOR. (*In low tone*) Pretty close call that—Bar Harbor! Architect! That young lady—Miss Ainslee was *engaged* to the man I think you mean—Found a lady's boots on his fire escape, didn't they? (*Smiles*)

LEFFINGWELL. (*Reluctantly*) Yes.

DOCTOR. (*In eager enjoyment*) That's the boy—ever hear who the woman was?

LEFFINGWELL. (*Closing the question*) No—never. (*Door bell off*)

DOCTOR. But you said you knew her husband, didn't you? Cost him so much to keep her name out of the papers.

LEFFINGWELL. (*Annoyed*) I can't talk about it with others within hearing.

DOCTOR. Oh I hear you if you talk low enough. You know it's the bass viol one hears furthest in the string band, and the tuba in the brass ones—"umpa"—"umpa"—all the trans-Atlantic steamers

have their fog whistles keyed low—science has demonstrated that it's the low vibration that carries—so if my friends will only talk bass, and contralto—

(*Enter* MOTHER *up* L.)

MOTHER. (*Tranquilly*) Here's your medicine, Henry—I put it in both ears and filled them with cotton.

DOCTOR. You put it *in* the ear?

MOTHER. *In* both ears.

DOCTOR. That's a liniment—I told you to put it *on* the ears. (*Going.—to* LEFFINGWELL) Frozen *ears!* The cook first parboiled them; and now Mrs. Rumsey has deviled them, and stuffed them with cotton. (*Exit up* L.)

(*Enter* MRS. BONNER, R.)

MRS. BONNER. What's the matter?

LEFFINGWELL. I hope Miss Ainslee didn't hear me?

MRS. BONNER. No. (*Bell rings*) Dear me—why don't the servants answer that bell?

MOTHER. The butler went to the stable. I'm afraid the maid—ah—doesn't *hear* it—I'll answer it, dear. (*Exit up* R.)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. I want you to promise me, Mr. Leffingwell, not to make any references to that subject at dinner.

(LEFFINGWELL *protests in dumb show. Enter* BUTLER.)

BUTLER. The coachman's sorry, ma'am, but he can't open the stable doors. They're not built to slide, he says, like stable doors ought to. They open out and the drift's that heavy he can't do it.

LEFFINGWELL. (*To* MRS. BONNER) No matter, really, I'll walk. It isn't 500 yards across lots.

MRS. BONNER. Stupid not to be able to open the stable doors.

LEFFINGWELL. Architect's fault—who was he?

MRS. BONNER. Walter Corbin—supposed to be one of the best.

LEFFINGWELL. 'Mm—I should say not for domestic work. (*Going*) I'll be only a minute late—but don't delay the dinner for me.

MRS. BONNER. Oh—yes.

(*Exit* LEFFINGWELL 2 L. *Enter* MOTHER *up* R.)

MOTHER. Where's Mabel?

(*Exit* BUTLER *to pantry.*)

MRS. BONNER. In the studio.

MOTHER. (*Nervously*) Her brother's here.

MRS. BONNER. Which brother?

MOTHER. Dick—the one that's—(*Taps head*)

(*Enter* DICK.)

DICK. Excuse me, Mrs. Bonner—but there's some dreadful trouble. (*He speaks in nervous, jerky way and with shifting glances*)

MRS. BONNER. Why, Dick—what is it?

DICK. Is Mr. Bonner in?

MRS. BONNER. No. Has anything happened to him?

DICK. Oh—no—but I need his help.

MRS. BONNER. What is it?

DICK. Mabel! (*Sits overcome by window*)

MRS. BONNER. Mabel? What about her?

DICK. Gone—(*Buries his face*)

MRS. BONNER. Gone where? (DICK *points up.* MRS. BONNER *looks at mother*)

MRS. BONNER. Yes—but she'll be down again in a minute.

(DICK *looks at* MRS. BONNER.)

DICK. Who?

MRS. BONNER. Why, Mabel.

DICK. (*Tearfully*) Oh no, you don't understand.

MRS. BONNER. What is it?

DICK. (*Displays telegram*) She's dead—dead.

MRS. BONNER. Your sister Mabel? (DICK *nods inarticulate. Exit* MOTHER R.) Why, Dick, what can you mean? Mabel's here with *me.*

DICK. (*Looks up—pause*) Mabel?

MRS. BONNER. Why yes. Does that telegram say Mabel's dead?

DICK. (*Affecting astonishment*) Yes.

MRS. BONNER. Who sent it?

DICK. It's signed "mother."

(*Enter* MABEL, R.)

MABEL. (*Accusingly*) Dick.

DICK. (*Emotionally*) Mabel. (*To her with embrace*)

MABEL. (*Severly*) I thought you were in California?

MRS. BONNER. The poor boy's just had a telegram saying you *were*—a telegram with bad news of *you*——

MABEL. (*Suspiciously*) Oh. (*Pause*)

DICK. (*Weakly*) Can't see who'd do a thing like that. (*Regards telegram with severity*)

MABEL. (*Putting* MRS. BONNER *out* R.) Mrs. Bonner, won't you talk to—(*Pause*) any of your

guests, who may come down stairs. Keep them there a minute.

MRS. BONNER. Certainly. (*Exit* R.)

MABEL. (*Nervously*) Give me that telegram, Dick. (DICK *gives telegram. She continues with just a glance at it. Sits by him*) What do you mean, Dick?—haven't you disgraced the family enough already? You've cheated every friend of father's; and every business associate of poor brother George; and now you begin on *my* friends —I can't stand it—Dick—I *won't* stand it.

DICK. I didn't know you were here? Did I?

MABEL. Of course you didn't; but you know these were *my* friends, Dick—*Mr.* Bonner knows of you only as my brother—I didn't think you'd try to—to get money from him and so—so dishonestly. (*Displays telegram*)

DICK. I didn't—I came here to the Bevin House to see a man that was stopping *there*—a classmate of mine—a sympathetic fellow, that a telegram like that, would appeal to—but he's gone to New Mexico on business—I don't *know* anybody else in the town and—and I've got to have a hundred dollars "Mab" I've just got to—that's *all.*

MABEL. Mother sent you two hundred the day before I came here.

DICK. That was to "*pay up*" with. *It* was gone before I got it—you see, Mabel, you're a girl—you haven't any idea of the money a man needs—just to look decent, and buy a drink for the men that buy a drink for him.

MABEL. You could have all you need, Dick, if you'd only behave. If you'd only do an honest day's work for father or for brother George.

DICK. Haven't I tried that? Father and George don't understand—they're business men—*I* can't live in *Louisville.*

MABEL. Why can't you, Dick? A great many *do* live there.

DICK. (*Innocently*) Not as many as live in Pittsburg.

MABEL. Well?

DICK. And nobody lives in *Pittsburg* that can get away.

MABEL. That's nonsense, Dick.

DICK. No. There's a society here in New York City called the Pennsylvania society—eight hundred strong—nearly all of them, men that have escaped from Pittsburg—after a fellow's been *a man,* Mabel, I don't mean a married man—or one of these "quick lunch," business men but *a man*—a free man, in New York—at liberty to go any place in the town he wants to, he can't *live* in Louisville again or any place like that. (*Pause*)

MABEL. That's silly prejudice Dick; Louisville's a beautiful little city.

DICK. Oh, yes, the local papers call it a metropolis—I know, but you *pay* one of them for a full page "ad"; pay 'em *real* money, and the next day the editor starts for New York—I've got only one life to live and I don't mean to waste it out there.

MABEL. Oh, Dick why do you behave like this—you don't know what you're doing to father. He looks seventy instead of fifty-eight and all in six years of this terrible conduct by you.

DICK. Oh, no—they all look that way, Mabel, you simply notice father more than the rest, because you're with him. What can you expect? He passes that plate in the new stone church Sunday morning and thinks he's had a day's recreation—I sized it all up when I used to come home in the old vacation days. It was a body blow even in my Sophomore years, but after the Junior commencement, I whispered myself—"Little Dickey, your post office address will be 'number one New York'."

MABEL. But where's your pride, Dick? You can't support yourself in New York.

DICK. *No* outsider does at first, but I will. You *wait.*

MABEL. We have waited—six years—and every few months has brought some awful story of *you*—checks on banks where you had no money—George's name and father's to other checks they hadn't signed——

DICK. I always wired them—didn't I? And always wrote and explained it. Mother understands it.

MABEL. But those things are crimes, Dick dear. You seem so callous to that idea. They're *crimes*—men have been sent to jail for less offences than yours.

DICK. Oh, I can't go into the ethics of the thing with you, Mab. There's a certain amount of money coming to me some day isn't there?—When the Governor—when he quits?

MABEL. Not necessarily.

DICK. (*Impatient at feminine logic*) Of course not necessarily—but naturally?—Well it'll do me a great deal more good *now.*

MABEL. The family doesn't think so.

DICK. The family's in *Louisville*—I'm in *New York.* I know—now when I sit up nights and think out a scheme; the necessary machinery to get some of it to-day instead of sordidly hoping for—for anybody's death—you can't call that crime?

MABEL. The *law* calls it crime.

DICK. What is the law?

MABEL. (*Posed*) What?

DICK. (*Repeating*) What is the *law?*

MABEL. (*Struggling*) Well—it—the law is—it's the rules of conduct for—for society.

DICK. Not at all—a law is generally an arbitrary *prohibition* of something the *majority* of the people prefer to do. For example—"Keep off the grass"; that's because most people naturally prefer to get on the grass. *Walk* on it. And *sit* on

it and *roll* on it. And you can't make it morally wrong by calling it bad names. I'm no criminal because I ask a little help from the family.

MABEL. Why, Dick—that kind of talk sounds almost as tho' you hadn't good sense.

DICK. (*Unnecessarily resentful*) I told you never to say that to me—I'm the only one in the family that *has* good sense—excepting you perhaps. You manage to get down here a month or two every year on some excuse—what's on to-night?

MABEL. Mrs. Bonner has some guests to dinner.

DICK. Stopping here?

MABEL. No—coming.

DICK. Where's *your* room?

MABEL. On the studio gallery—just above that door.

DICK. (*Going to door*) Show me.

MABEL. (*Following*) No, Dick—don't go in the studio. You must go back to the place where you're staying. Is it far?

DICK. About a block. But I've got to have that hundred by morning.

MABEL. But not this way, Dick, (*Indicates telegram*) not dishonestly.

DICK. What other way is there?

MABEL. You can work.

DICK. Not a hundred dollars' worth in one night —unless I work some friend.

MABEL. The family will send it, if they know you're trying; if I write them you are.

DICK. There isn't time for that. I—I endorsed a note that's due in the morning.

MABEL. Is that so pressing—your name on the back of a note?

DICK. 'Tisn't *my* name.

MABEL. Whose is it?

DICK. A friend's. You see he doesn't know it, and if I can take the note up at nine he won't need to know it.

MABEL. (*In horror*) You mean you forged a signature?

DICK. Yes.

MABEL. Not father's nor George's?

DICK. No—a friend's I told you.

MABEL. Dick!

DICK. Now don't preach about it, Mabel. Help a fellow if you can but don't nag.

MABEL. I *can't* help you, Dick.

DICK. (*Regarding her jewels*) You could lend me that pigeon blood ring—(*She shakes her head*) or that necklace.

MABEL. —they're not mine. They're mother's.

DICK. Be *yours* some day—she's always *said* so.

MABEL. I can't Dick.

DICK. I don't see *why* you can't.

MABEL. They're entrusted to my care.

DICK. Suppose you lost one of them?

MABEL. That would be an accident.

DICK. Well have an accident—say you lost the ring.

MABEL. Which would be adding a lie to the dishonesty.

DICK. Isn't wearing them—also a lie? It's the *pretence* that they're yours when you know they're not. You're willing to issue *that* lie thirty days in the month just to feed your vanity—but one little fib—the word "*lost*" instead of "*lent*"—in order to keep me out of the police station and your feminine sense of rectitude rises. You see, Mabel, it's you, and the people of your kind that haven't good sense. *You're* the law makers and the law abiders —the people that don't tell lies but are dev'lish willing to *live* them.

MABEL. No, Dick—I'll *telegraph* home. I'll do that.

DICK. There isn't time to *telegraph*. You see I was counting on this classmate of mine at the Bevin House. He was there yesterday. But my luck—

I pick the one day in the year that he goes away. Then I come *here* with that telegram. The one house in America, the one house fully equipped to —to doubt it—when your hard luck gets to running in a tide like that it becomes ridiculous that's all—ridiculous. (*Telephone rings*) What's that? (*He starts nervously*)

MABEL. The telephone.

(*Enter* MRS. BONNER *up* R.)

MRS. BONNER. That's the 'phone, isn't it? Excuse me. (*Exit to 'phone*)

DICK. (*Urging in undertone*) *She's* probably got a hundred herself.

(MABEL *shakes head.*)

MRS. BONNER. (*At 'phone*) Hello—yes—Mrs. Bonner.

DICK. These commuters usually keep a fair amount in the house with them.

(MABEL *shakes head.*)

MRS. BONNER. A telegram for me. Thank you, Mr. Waterbury—please read it.

DICK. Do you room alone?

MABEL. Of course I room alone.

DICK. (*Mutters; with frown*) You know I *could* take them from you now by force—if I wanted to be ugly—you know that, don't you? I could step right out there and you wouldn't dare make a row about it.

MABEL. Sh——

MRS. BONNER. (*Dejectedly*) Oh—oh dear—well thank you very much.

DICK. Only my decency—that's all.

(*Enter* MRS. BONNER.)

MRS. BONNER. What do you think, my dear? From Mr. Reed—they're *all* of them—the Johnstons—Mr. Newton—Jennie Prentiss—all at 42d street—not a train running.

MABEL. How dreadful.

MRS. BONNER. (*Turns to table*) And dinner for ten—terrapin—larded fillet, and squabs. You know I could sit right down and cry about it.

DICK. (*Grimly*) I don't think I'd cry, Mrs. Bonner about having too much terrapin—there *are* deeper sorrows.

MRS. BONNER. (*After an astonished pause*) Thank you, Dick I won't.

(*Enter* DOCTOR *up* L.)

DOCTOR. She's all right, Eva.

MRS. BONNER. Who?

DOCTOR. Nora—why, Dick, this is an unexpected pleasure.

MRS. BONNER. Father—I've had a telegram—none of the New Yorkers coming. You and mother must help us eat the dinner.

DOCTOR. I've had one dinner with the children.

MRS. BONNER. But that was a very light one; and Dick must stay, too.

DICK. Well really, Mrs. Bonner——

MRS. BONNER. We won't be disappointed. We'll just make an informal picnic of it and have a good time.

DICK. Well thank you—if you insist. (*Louder*) Terrapin for ten. (*To* DOCTOR)

DOCTOR. (*Warningly*) Terrapin takes four hours to digest.

DICK. Well, I've got the time. I was just complaining, Doctor, of my *own* hard luck—but this

looks like a good omen—doesn't it? (*Indicates table*)

DOCTOR. I should say so. You believe in omens, Dick?

DICK. Every man with any sporting blood in his veins believes in omens.

(*The fountain ceases running properly, and plays full onto* DICK's *breast.*)

MRS. BONNER. Oh—there's a bug in it.

DICK. (*Fatefully*) Well if it's only a bug. (*Turns up his collar and takes it*)

MABEL. Stand to one side, Dick.

DICK. (*Stubbornly*) Not when things are beginning to come my way as strongly as that.

MRS. BONNER. Dear me—how does one turn it off? (*Rings*)

MABEL. Dick, that's foolish.

DICK. Not if it's only a bug—and, if it isn't a bug I want to know it.

(*Enter* BUTLER.)

MRS. BONNER. The fountain's out of order, call Nora, please.

(*Exit* BUTLER.)

DOCTOR. That'll make you ill, Dick.

DICK. Oh, I think not. I'm glad the butler *couldn't* stop it—I'll wait for what's her name—Nora? (*Enter* NORA *with very red face and ears tied up—she promptly dives and shuts off fountain*) What *was* that?

MABEL. Be still, Dick—you'll offend her.

(NORA *reappears.*)

MRS. BONNER. Thank you, Nora.

DICK. (*Fascinated by* NORA'S *ugliness in her frozen make-up*) Yes, thank you.

NORA. (*Regarding him*) You're welcome, sir.

DICK. Any time I can do as much for you call on me.

MRS. BONNER. That will do, Nora.

NORA. Yes, Ma'am. (*Exit*)

DOCTOR. (*To* DICK) She's frost bitten.

DICK. She looks it—(*Pause*)

MRS. BONNER. So you stay, don't you, Dick?

DICK. (*Turns down his collar*) Yes, thank you.

MRS. BONNER. I'll put you next to Mrs. Leffingwell.

DICK. (*Quickly*) Next to whom?

MRS. BONNER. Mrs. Leffingwell—Mrs. Howard Leffingwell.

DICK. (*Stung*) Oh—well really—you see, Mrs. Bonner—(*Pause; and with haunted glare at the fountain*) that wasn't a bug.

MRS. BONNER. It doesn't matter, does it?

DICK. (*Rousing himself*) I think, I won't stay, thank you. I've heard of the Leffingwells—they're rather dressy.

MRS. BONNER. What of that—here's father not dressed—or if you wish it you can have a suit of Tom's—Mr. Corbin is wearing Mr. Klargess' clothes.

DICK. (*In further alarm*) Who is?

MRS. BONNER. Mr. Corbin.

DICK. Which Mr. Corbin?

MABEL. Walter Corbin.

DICK. (*Passing his hand over his eyes*) With the Leffingwells?

MRS. BONNER. Yes.

DICK. (*More haunted. Pause*) That wasn't a bug. (*Looks at fountain. Starts to door*)

MABEL. Dick——

CORBIN. (*Appearing* C.) Have I kept you waiting?

DICK. (*Suddenly at seeing* CORBIN) Good night. (*Exit* 3 L. *into the snow and night*)

MRS. BONNER. (*Calling after*) Why, Dick—Dick, please stay. (*Turns*) Why, what made him do that?

CORBIN. (*To* MABEL, *uneasily*) How are you?

MABEL. (*Constrained*) Good evening.

MRS. BONNER. (*Seeing* CORBIN *and* MABEL) Oh—I'll get mother and we won't wait any longer for anybody—(*Significantly*) Come, father—Mabel, I wish you'd have the candles lighted and seat the party to suit yourselves—you and Walter. (*Exit*)

DOCTOR. (*Pausing in exit*) Have I time for a dress suit? (*Exit*)

CORBIN. (*Pleading*) Mabel.

MABEL. (*Coldly*) Mr. Corbin.

CORBIN. Is it *Mr. Corbin?*

MABEL. Mrs. Bonner asked us to light the candles. (*At pantry door*) Oh, butler—I think Mrs. Bonner wishes the table lighted now.

BUTLER. (*Off*) Yes, Miss. (MABEL *moves down to window*)

CORBIN. (*Following*) Is that all our—our association has meant?

MABEL. It seems so.

CORBIN. Does it?

MABEL. There was very little *mutual* obligation in it—or—or trust.

CORBIN. *Trust?*

MABEL. *Yes, trust.*

(*Enter* NORA *with matches.*)

CORBIN. (*After watching* NORA *strike one or two matches*) I'll do that if you don't mind. Mrs.

Bonner asked *me* to light them. (*Takes the matches*)

NORA. Thank you, sir.

CORBIN. You're the girl they put that stuff on, aren't you?

NORA. Yes, sir. (*Dives under table*)

CORBIN. Is there something to do there? (*The bell rings*)

NORA. (*Calling from under table*) Never mind, Mr. Orton, it's me.

CORBIN. (*After a look about—puzzled*) Is Mr. Orton *there?*

NORA. (*Calling*) Please watch it, Miss Ainslee.

CORBIN. Watch it?

(*Enter* BUTLER *with cocktails. The fountain flows and hits* BUTLER *squarely in breast. He starts and side steps.*)

NORA. How's that?

CORBIN. Deadly accurate.

MABEL. Stop it, Nora—stop it.

(*The fountain stops.*)

BUTLER. (*Calmly, but with disgust*) I don't belong here, sir—I hope you can see that.

CORBIN. I noticed that you were a little out of place.

BUTLER. I'm just temporary. 'Ave a cocktail, sir?

(CORBIN *takes one.*)

NORA. (*Appearing*) There's a bug in it.

CORBIN. Oh—(*Changes the cocktail*)

(*Exit* NORA. BUTLER *passes cocktail to* MABEL.)

MABEL. Thank you, no.

(BUTLER *goes to studio.*)

CORBIN. (*Offering cocktail*) It's very mild.

MABEL. Thank you.

BUTLER. (*Seeing no one in studio*) 'Ave the others come, miss?

MABEL. There will be only two others and the family, I believe.

BUTLER. Thank you. (*Exit to pantry*)

CORBIN. (*Lighting candles*) Here are cards—I think Mrs. Bonner asked you to arrange them.

MABEL. Yes, I'll do it.

CORBIN. (*Following* MABEL *as they walk*) You spoke of trust between us. The absence of trust was not—not my failure, was it?

MABEL. I think so—I only asked for the facts.

CORBIN. Pardon me, my dear Mabel, you—thought you asked only for the facts, but you really asked for the particulars. The fact is that I was entirely innocent of any wrong doing. Assured of that *you* should trust *me*.

MABEL. Assured of *that*—(*Pause*) I would trust you.

CORBIN. Oh—(P*ause*) You doubt it?

MABEL. It seems to me that innocence would scarcely have so much to conceal——

CORBIN. (*Pause*) Hardly a maxim—(*Pause*) still a column in most of the sensational papers strikes me as very indifferent secrecy.

MABEL. None of them had—(*Pause*)

CORBIN. (*Pause*) Had what?

MABEL. None of them had *her* name.

CORBIN. I see—(*Pause*) Well none of them should have had it. It was sufficient that their vile implications had one victim.

MABEL. (*With some resentment*) Victim?

CORBIN. I call myself that——

MABEL. Oh, you.

CORBIN. Yes I. (*Pause*) I've suffered by it in every way—(*Slowly*) mentally—sentimentally—and financially.

MABEL. Financially?

CORBIN. Yes, financially. (*Changing tone*) We turn down these electrics with the candles, don't we?

MABEL. Yes.

CORBIN. (*Turning out the electric lights and leaving only candles*) Whenever an owner discussing my plans of his building mentions a fire escape—I'm so disconcerted that I seem completely ignorant and thereby lose his confidence, and sometimes his business—all because (*Pause*) a reprobate chose to make me look guilty—by—in the manner that he did.

MABEL. (*Pause*) They were at your window, weren't they?

CORBIN. Yes, but they'd been stolen from the lady's room and placed there.

MABEL. Why did her *husband* behave as *he* did?

CORBIN. Her husband was misled.

MABEL. By what?

CORBIN. By the man who tried to manufacture a case against me.

MABEL. Why should any man try to do that?

CORBIN. For money—he discovered that the husband was insanely jealous of the wife and he fed upon that weakness—wnen the husband demanded more than the man's mere verbal reports, the fellow had to create his own conditions—manufacture his evidence—Iago had done it with a handkerchief of Desdemona's. This fellow chose to do it with—with a pair of boots.

MABEL. Why did this Iago try to incite the husband's suspicious against *you?* Why were *you* his *Cassio?*

CORBIN. For money I've told you.

MABEL. Didn't you know the—the gentleman's wife?

CORBIN. Of course I *knew* her.

MABEL. The newspapers said you had been *noticeably* attentive to her.

CORBIN. That I deny.

MABEL. It seems some one noticed it.

CORBIN. I tell you he exaggerated it to get money.

MABEL. But you *knew* her.

CORBIN. Yes.

MABEL. Your letters to me at the very time complained of your loneliness. You said you were going with no girls—that you wouldn't even have been *in* Bar Harbor except for business.

CORBIN. All true—*all* of it. I was attentive to none. This lady I had known casually many years. Our meeting was quite accidental—quite.

MABEL. And you were not attentive to *her?*

CORBIN. I was not. I danced with her *once* at the club house—once I was a guest on a yacht where she was also a guest—two afternoons we were in the same sets in a tennis tournament—no more.

MABEL. Who *was* she?

CORBIN. I shan't—tell you—for many reasons.

MABEL. What are they?

CORBIN. The least of them is that I promised her husband's agents I would tell no one.

MABEL. What is the more important reason?

CORBIN. I think I owe that much to the lady herself. But see, my dear Mabel, what an unworthy attitude this is for you—women forgive men who are *really guilty;* and who confess it.

MABEL. But you don't *confess* it.

CORBIN. I have nothing to confess.

MABEL. But you have something you could *tell.*

CORBIN. Only the poor lady's name and what good would that *do you?*

MABEL. I'd know who she was and if you went back to her—that's what——

CORBIN. (*Rapidly*) And would you care? That's the first hopeful thing you've said. Well I won't go back to her if you call it that—I'll promise you never to be where she is—if you'll only say you believe me. If—if we can only be the—the same old friends we were.

MABEL. Old friends?

CORBIN. The sweethearts. (*Embraces her*) Ah! You do love me, don't you?

MABEL. Do I dare to?

CORBIN. You must—what happiness! *I* hold you—*you* in my arms again.

MABEL. Didn't you know I was here?

CORBIN. Truly no—the storm drove me in—look at it. (*They turn to the window*) The dear old storm. It seems to laugh with us, doesn't it?

MABEL. Yes, it really does.

CORBIN. The worst storm since Roscoe Conklin died. Can't you imagine it dancing that—swirling snow.

MABEL. (*Meaningly*) It is dancing. Let's call it a two step.

CORBIN. (*Turning to her*) You angel——

MABEL. (*Standing him off*) Not even in the same town—will you?

CORBIN. What?

MABEL. Where *she* is.

CORBIN. No—not even the same town.

(*They embrace.*)

MABEL. (*Pause*) Does she, live in New York?

CORBIN. Let's leave that out. You'll be wanting the street, and number after that, and the color of her hair.

MABEL. What *is* the color of her hair?

CORBIN. Oh—I forget; the usual color I think for a married woman.

MABEL. You're laughing at me already.

CORBIN. I'm laughing with you.

(*Enter* NORA.)

NORA. Beg pardon, miss—Mrs. Bonner's not here is she?

MABEL. No.

NORA. (*Going—pauses*) You saw it, Miss Ainslee, I'm sure; and your young man saw it—when I turned on the fountain—I didn't even know Mr. Orton was in the room, did I?

MABEL. Mr. Orton?

NORA. The butler.

MABEL. I think not—I didn't.

NORA. He says I took aim a purpose at his door, and then rung for him; and that he won't wait on the company to-night unless Mrs. Bonner gives him a "dry bosom." (*Exit*)

MABEL. Does what?

CORBIN. Gentlemen of Mr. Orton's profession sometimes emulate an economy practiced at modest funerals. The use of the *front* of the shirt only.

MABEL. (*Understanding*) Oh.

CORBIN. I doubt Mrs. Bonner's ability to replenish him.

MABEL. (*With cards at table*) That's Mrs. Bonner's place, of course. Mr. Newton isn't coming—Mr. Reed isn't—Mrs. Leffingwell—where shall I put Mrs. Leffingwell?

CORBIN. (*Startled*) Mrs. Leffingwell—what Mrs. Leffingwell is that?

MABEL. Mr. Leffingwell is a real estate man—Howard Leffingwell I think is the name. (*'Phone bell rings*) Why?

CORBIN. (*With forced composure*) Oh, nothing.

MABEL. Do you know her?

CORBIN. I can't say that I do. There's the 'phone, isn't it?

MABEL. (*Going*) Yes——

CORBIN. (*In ghastly whisper*) The Leffingwells!

MABEL. (*At 'phone*) Yes—Mrs. Bonner's house—who is it? (*Enter* MRS. BONNER *followed by* NORA *up* R.) Oh, Mr. Leffingwell—this is Miss Ainslee—Mrs. Bonner is upstairs.

CORBIN. (*In undertone*) I can't dine here, Mrs. Bonner.

MRS. BONNER. What?

CORBIN. Sh—(*Indicates* MABEL)

MABEL. Oh, yes, she is—wait a moment. (*Speaks*) Mrs. Bonner—he wishes to speak with you.

MRS. BONNER. (*Taking 'phone*) Who is it—(*Pause*) oh—(*Pause*) no—not yet. That is, I think not yet—one minute. (*Speaks*) *Mrs.* Leffingwell hasn't come?

MABEL. No.

MRS. BONNER. (*At 'phone*) No—not yet. (*Pause*) Well isn't it? perhaps she stopped in at some neghbor's.

(*Enter* MOTHER *up* R.)

MOTHER. (*In excitement*) Eva! where's Eva?

MABEL. At the 'phone.

MOTHER. There's a carriage at the gate and somebody's calling from the roadway inside—look here. (*Goes to glass door* L.)

MRS. BONNER. (*Calls into 'phone*) Wait a minute. There's a carriage just coming on our place.

MOTHER. No, dear, the carriage couldn't get up. Some persons are walking.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Outside in the snow*) Hello—hello.

CORBIN. They're calling—may I open the door?

MRS. BONNER. Yes, open it. (CORBIN *opens*

door. There is effect of snow and wind) Who is it?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*In distant tones*) Hello—hello.

COACHMAN. (*With* MRS. LEFFINGWELL) Hello there.

CORBIN. (*Answering*) Hello—hello.

MRS. BONNER. Who is it?

CORBIN. The wind's against us. They don't hear.

MRS. BONNER. I'll make them hear. (*'Phone rings*) Please answer that, Mabel. (MABEL *goes to 'phone.* MRS. BONNER *goes to pantry door and gets a megaphone*)

MOTHER. (*Peering into the night*) Are they coming this way or *standing* there?

MABEL. (*At 'phone*) Hello.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Off; calls*) Where is the walk?

MABEL. (*At 'phone speaking to* LEFFINGWELL) We don't know yet. They're coming.

MRS. BONNER. (*Through megaphone at the porch door*) Who is it?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Off*) It's I—Cora—where is the road?

MRS. BONNER. (*To the others*) It's Mrs. Leffingwell.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Calling*) Won't you please come help us, *somebody?*

MRS. BONNER. (*Fretted; calls*) Yes—yes—Cora—(*Speaks to those near*) she wants help—dear me—where's my coachman? Where's the butler?

NORA. Yes, ma'am. (*Exit to find* BUTLER)

MRS. BONNER. Mr. Corbin—but you can't, can you? (*Referring to his clothes*)

CORBIN. I can in a minute. (*Exit* R.)

MRS. BONNER. (*Through the megaphone*) Just a minute, Cora—we're coming, stay where you are.

MOTHER. (*Quietly*) I guess they'll do *that.*

(*Enter* BUTLER.)

MRS. BONNER. Orton—there's a lady there in the snow drift—can't you help her?

(*Enter* NORA.)

BUTLER. (*In superior leisure*) I wouldn't dare, ma'am—the waitress turned that hose on me—and *she* froze both ears going to the stable herself.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Off*) Please come, somebody.

(*Exit* NORA *to rescue into the snow.*)

MRS. BONNER. Oh, Nora, you can't do that.

BUTLER. (*With finality*) Oh, yes, ma'am, she's 'ad three cocktails.

(*'Phone rings. Exit* BUTLER *to the pantry.*)

MRS. BONNER. (*Gesticulating toward the 'phone*) Tell him "yes" it's Mrs. Leffingwell.

(MABEL *again to 'phone. Enter* CORBIN *wearing the rubber boots, and over his dress coat a reefer.*)

CORBIN. Let's have all the light.

(MOTHER *turns on electrics.* CORBIN *plunges into the drift.*)

MABEL. (*At 'phone*) Yes—Mr. Leffingwell—it's your wife.

MRS. BONNER. (*With megaphone*) Never mind, Nora—don't try it.

MABEL. (*From the 'phone*) Eva—Eva dear.

MRS. BONNER. (*Megaphoning*) The path is to the left, Walter. That's the children's fish pond.

MABEL. (*Answering 'phone to the impatient husband*) She hasn't come in yet.

MRS. BONNER. (*Calling*) *More* to the left—more *yet.*

MABEL. There's a snow drift that's all—yes *she's* here—Eva—Eva—he wants *you.*

MRS. BONNER. (*Excitedly*) What is it?

MABEL. He asks what's the matter.

MRS. BONNER. (*Megaphoning at telephone*) There's nothing the matter—they can't find the path, that's all.

MOTHER. (MRS. BONNER *turns back to door*) He's there now.

MABEL. (*At 'phone to* LEFFINGWELL) That was Mrs. Bonner——

NORA. (*Off*) Come this way—them's bushes.

MABEL. (*Explaining*) No! She had a megaphone.

MRS. BONNER. (*In bromide repetition. To* MOTHER) The worst since Roscoe Conklin died they say.

MABEL. Oh—really?—Mrs. Bonner'll be awfully disappointed I'm sure but if you can't—you can't.

MOTHER. (*Referring to outsiders*) How many are there?

MABEL. (*Explaining*) They left the wagon at the gate.

MRS. BONNER. (*Calls*) Nora—Nora—get up child, don't lie there.

MABEL. The coachman, I think.

MOTHER. No business out there, anyway, with those ears.

DOCTOR. (*Entering up* R. *Sings*) Oh, that we two were Maying, etc. (*He is in dress suit*)

MOTHER. (*Rebukingly*) Henry!

DOCTOR. (*With a shiver*) Where's that draught come from?

MABEL. (*Calling*) They're here now.

DOCTOR. (*Turning to* MABEL) What's that—(*Turns to* MRS. BONNER) What are you doing, Eva—shut the door.

MRS. BONNER. (*Opening door wide*) Why, you poor thing.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Off and panting*) Oh, isn't it awful—Eva, I'm frozen.

COACHMAN. (*Cautioning*) Hold tight, ma'am.

DOCTOR. *Who* is it?

MRS. BONNER. Don't slip, there are three steps—four counting the porch.

CORBIN. (*In command*) Your side—your side first, my man.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. The other way, Tim.

COACHMAN. Yes, ma'am.

DOCTOR. Who's with her?

(*Fuss and fume by* CORBIN *and* COACHMAN.)

MABEL. (*Calling into 'phone*) In the doorway now.

DOCTOR. (*To* MABEL) What's that?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Being put into door*) Oh, Eva—my feet—my stockings——

MRS. BONNER. You poor thing.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Tim may come in and warm himself?

MRS. BONNER. Of course, come in, Tim.

(*The faces of* MRS. LEFFINGWELL, CORBIN *and* TIM *are purple red with cold.* TIM'S *nose is white.* MABEL *drops 'phone and comes to ladies.*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Oh, what a night. Two hours in that wagon, Eva.

MRS. BONNER. This way, dear—(*They cross to the mantel*)

DOCTOR. Not by the fire—(*To* TIM)—your nose is bitten.

CORBIN. Yes. (*Exit again to the snow*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. I stood up in *one* drift—It went into my corset; both ways.

DOCTOR. Rub it with snow.

(MRS. LEFFINGWELL *looks startled.* CORBIN *returns and rubs* TIM'S *nose with snow.*)

TIM. Phwat are you doin'?—It's a damned poor time for joking who ever ye are.

(*Enter* BUTLER *with cocktails.*)

DOCTOR. It'll turn black and crack open if you don't—here, Mrs. Leffingwell—keep away from the fire and take this.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. What is it?

DOCTOR. Drink it.

(MRS. LEFFINGWELL *takes cocktail. 'Phone rings vigorously and continues.*)

TIM. Is them whiskey?

CORBIN. Yes, have one. (*Passes it*)

TIM. Thank you. (*Takes a cocktail*)

MRS. BONNER. (*Annoyed at 'phone*) Yes—yes—yes.

(MABEL *goes to 'phone.*)

TIM. (*After a drink*) Your man'll help me, Mrs. Bonner? The wagon's broke down at the gate.

('*Phone stops.*)

MRS. BONNER. Certainly.

(*Exit* TIM *by pantry to* L.)

MABEL. (*At 'phone*) *Yes*—who is it?

MOTHER. (*Kneeling by* MRS. LEFFINGWELL) I must take your boots off, my dear—Henry! get a pair of my slippers.

(*Exit* DOCTOR *up* R.)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*In alarm over* CORBIN) No, really—I can't stay.

MRS. BONNER. Can't stay—what do you mean?

CORBIN. I must say good-night *myself,* Mrs. Bonner.

MRS. BONNER. But, why? Oh, excuse me—Mrs. Leffingwell—may I present Mr. Corbin. (*'Phone rings*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. How are you?

MABEL. Mrs. Leffingwell—your husband wants to speak to you.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Where is he?

MABEL. At home—he's telephoning.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Just a minute, Mrs. Rumsey. (*Goes to 'phone*)

MRS. BONNER. What do you mean, Walter?

(*They talk earnestly in dumb show.*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*At 'phone*) Yes—Howard! and I'm coming right home. (*Her tone is tearful*)

MRS. BONNER. (*Turning to* MRS. LEFFINGWELL) Dear me—is everybody crazy?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. I can't—then what must *I* do?

DOCTOR. (*To* MOTHER) Who is it? (*She hushes him*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*At 'phone*) And you can't come at *all*—oh—oh.

MRS. BONNER. (*Disappointed*) Oh—Mr. Leffingwell can't *come*.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Speaks*) He says I couldn't *get* home—(*Turns* to 'phone again)

MRS. BONNER. (*To* CORBIN) And where could *you* go?

MABEL. (*Overhearing*) Go? Walter?

MRS. BONNER. Yes! New York can wait. (*Taps him playfully*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*In alarm*) Put them both to bed, won't you, dear, and call me for the slightest thing. Good-bye, dear. (*Turns, and sits crying hysterically, but not violently*)

MRS. BONNER. Why, Cora—is anything the matter?

(CORBIN *goes moodily to fireplace. Enter* DOCTOR *with slippers.*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Oh, no—it's just the—the excitement of the whole thing—the fright I suppose and the—oh, dear, what's that?

(*Enter* NORA, *door* L., *returned from her plunge outdoors.*)

NORA. Oh——

MRS. BONNER. Why, Nora.

(NORA *stands panting a moment leaning on jamb.*)

DOCTOR. Where has *she* been promenading again?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. It's your maid, isn't it? Thank you, Mrs. Rumsey.

(MOTHER *has changed* MRS. LEFFINGWELL'S *boots.*)

MRS. BONNER. I thought you went in the kitchen way——

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Referring to her own clothes*) They're all wet, I fear.

MOTHER. (*Fussing with* MRS. LEFFINGWELL'S *underwear*) You must change some of these things, Eva.

MRS. BONNER. (*To* MRS. LEFFINGWELL) Yes, come with me—we'll be right down. (*To* BUTLER) Orton—serve the cocktails——

BUTLER. Yes, ma'am. (*Starts out with tray on which two are left*)

MRS. BONNER. (*Dismissing* NORA) Nora—you'd better let Orton wait on us; at once. (*Exit with* MRS. LEFFINGWELL *up* R.)

NORA. Yes, ma'am—(*Taking cocktail as* BUTLER *passes*) Thank you.

BUTLER. (*In disgust to* CORBIN) Just temporary, sir—I wouldn't stay if I could get away. (*Indicates storm and shirt front, then spitefully to* NORA) You know bally well there *wasn't* a bug in it.

NORA. There was and I'll show you. (*Dives under table*)

MOTHER. (*Hastening after the ladies*) Henry! (*The* DOCTOR, *interested in* NORA, *doesn't hear*) Mr. Corbin—won't you do something with these.

CORBIN. (*Taking two quilted silk carriage boots from her*) What are they?

MOTHER. Mrs. Leffingwell's boots.

(*The fountain starts crookedly and swings like a panoramic camera.*)

CORBIN. Stop it—stop it. (*He covers the nozzle with one of the boots as the* DOCTOR *and* NORA *strive under the table*—MABEL *looks on*)

CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE:—*The Studio by night.*

The room is twenty feet high—Walls are panelled in gray wood ten feet high with gray plaster above. The ceiling is oak beams. Half way up the height on the left is a gallery raking up and down stage, and communicating to sleeping rooms by two doors and a window between the doors. The gallery is reached from the stage by steps in two flights at L. U. *corner. Under the gallery is a small door in 3—letting to main entrance hall of the house. Below this door on the stage is the arch giving to dining room—This door slides—Below this arch is the telephone used so often in* ACT I. *The back wall is glassed in three large lights of the usual parallel panes of studio windows. The middle light extends from ceiling to within six feet of stage and has a width from the stairway* L.—*to an equal distance from the right wall. The side lights fill the remaining space of the back wall but extends down only to the gallery level. Below the lights the wall is panelled. In the right side of back wall in the paneling is a door to exterior. The right wall has a door in one letting to* DR. RUMSEY'S *bed chamber. Another in 3 letting to a bath room. Between these doors is a massive chimney breast of red brick going from floor to ceiling. The massive mantel on oak beams is six feet from floor—it is hung underneath with mugs of copper—An ordinary man may stand beneath it. The fireplace is in proportion and is fitted with high black iron trimmings. Over the mantel is a*

painting of a castle. Over the doors are canvasses of various sizes unframed showing animal studies. Similar sketches are on the gallery wall and in the wall spaces R. *and* L. *back A window seat runs from the stairway back almost over to the exterior door. The seat is cushioned on top but filled with canvas stretchers underneath—A baby grand piano is in front of the seat,* C. *A nest of tea tables is below the piano. A couch of the bed variety is in front of fireplace made up with bedding and pillows—A draped model stand with drawers and compartments is center. A big easel is up* R. C. *A draped manikin is between the doors left. The glass at back is fitted with curtains rolling into spring rollers at bottom. These curtains are not practicable but stand at one position thro' the act. The backing is tree tops covered with snow and ice and arranged to sparkle in moonlight, later. The studio is lighted by a fire; and by lamps on piano and suspended from gallery, all fitted with electric lamps. Candles in candelabra are on mantel.*

At rise of curtain the stage is lighted by the fire only. The DOCTOR *in pajamas and a bath robe, is above the fire in a big chair. He feeds the fire bits of wood which throw off spectrumized lights.*

DOCTOR. Mr. Corbin—Mr. Corbin!

CORBIN. (*From door* 3 R.) Yes. (*Appears.* CORBIN *is also in pajamas. He carries a glass and a tooth brush*)

DOCTOR. See this one.

CORBIN. (*Regarding green light from fire*) That's a beauty.

DOCTOR. That's a pure sulphate of copper. (*It burns to red*) See it change.

CORBIN. Stunning. Be with you in just a minute. (*Exit* 3 R.)

(*Pause during which* DOCTOR *again feeds flames. Enter* MOTHER *in* 3 L. *She is in dressing gown and slippers and carries a bear skin carriage robe.*)

MOTHER. Henry! (*Pause*) You alone—(*Crosses*) Henry!

DOCTOR. (*Seeing* MOTHER) Hello! (*Meets her* C.)

MOTHER. Here's the carriage robe. This room gets pretty cold at night.

DOCTOR. (*With hand to ear*) What?

MOTHER. The thermometer outside Eva's window says six below—Eva thinks Mr. Corbin may also need this carriage robe.

DOCTOR. All right. I'll give it to him. Where are *you* sleeping?

MOTHER. Sh—I'm with Willie—(*She closes dining room door down* L.)

DOCTOR. What's that for?

MOTHER. Nora is there.

DOCTOR. Who is?

MOTHER. Nora.

DOCTOR. I thought the butler was to sleep there.

MOTHER. (*Shakes head*) Eva changed her mind—she didn't like the idea of a strange *man sleeping* in the dining room, so she gave the butler Nora's room and put Nora there. Tell Mr. Corbin.

DOCTOR. You think that'll interest Mr. Corbin?

MOTHER. Sh—He might take a notion to go *in* there.

DOCTOR. (*Pretending to be shocked*) Why mother!

MOTHER. (*Annoyed*) I mean if he thought the butler was there—for a drink or something.

(*Enter* CORBIN.)

CORBIN. (*Seeing a lady in the half light*) Oh—I beg pardon.

DOCTOR. Don't go. It's only mother.

CORBIN. I thought the ladies had retired.

MOTHER. Mrs. Bonner forgot one or two things. She thinks it possible that Mr. Bonner may still come in.

CORBIN. Yes.

MOTHER. So we've put the *chain* on the front door. He'll have to ring.

CORBIN. Very well, I'll answer it, if he does.

MOTHER. No need. Nora's in the dining room.

CORBIN. (*Snuffing*) I notice; that's a very powerful liniment of the Doctor's.

MOTHER. (*Assenting*) Nora'll answer the bell—but she's dreadfully stupid when she's first waked up, and Mrs. Bonner says will *you* be good enough to say to Tom that he's to come to the nursery because Mrs. Leffingwell has *his* room. (*Points up to the gallery*)

CORBIN. Yes, I'll tell him.

MOTHER. (*To* DOCTOR) Nora hasn't gone to sleep yet so if there's anything you men want from the buffet. Tobacco—or—or—anything.

DOCTOR. Well now that you *suggest*—I——

MOTHER. Well?

DOCTOR. She might fetch us the decanter and a syphon or two eh? (*To* CORBIN)

CORBIN. You're the Doctor.

MOTHER. (*Going*) Yes—He's the Doctor; and when he has to take his own medicine I'm pretty familiar with his prescription. (*Exit*)

DOCTOR. What do they call it? A "Dock and Doris."

CORBIN. (*Smiling*) Yes, a "Dock and Doris." (*Indicating door* R. *and changing topic*) Comes in

very handy—on a crowded occasion like this—that little room we put on for Tom's models.

DOCTOR. Oh I *always* sleep there.

CORBIN. You do?

DOCTOR. (*Nods*) Ever since Tom gave up the models and went in for cattle.

CORBIN. (*Inquiringly*) And *Mrs.* Rumsey.

DOCTOR. No Mrs. Rumsey's in the main building; I'm too musical. You know Mrs. Mumford's couplet? "Smile and the world smiles with you, Snore and you sleep alone."

(*Enter* MOTHER; *she carries a parcel in her left hand.*)

CORBIN. Oh that's it——

(DOCTOR *nods.*)

MOTHER. Here, Henry. (*Gets megaphone from the wall*) If you men are going to talk longer I'll ask Mr. Corbin to use this. Mrs. Leffingwell and Miss Ainslie have only those thin doors between them and you.

DOCTOR. What's that? (*Indicates her other hand*)

MOTHER. (*Displaying them*) Mrs. Leffingwell's boots. There's more fire here than there is in the dining room and they're still wet. (*Puts the boots on the round caps of the big fire irons*)

(*Enter* NORA *with wiskey, syphon, glasses and ice on a tray.*)

DOCTOR. Put it here, Nora. (*Takes a table from the nest.* NORA *puts outfit on table*)

MOTHER. Good night, Mr. Corbin. (*Gives hand*)

CORBIN. Good night, Mrs. Rumsey.

(*Exit* NORA *to the dining room.*)

MOTHER. (*Indicates the* DOCTOR) Don't let him keep you up.

(NORA *closes her door.*)

CORBIN. Which means don't keep *him* up; I understand.

MOTHER. (*Laughing*) Well, either way. (*Exit* 3 L.—*under the gallery*)

DOCTOR. (*Genial as things settle down to stag conditions*) Walter, my boy—you don't mind my calling you Walter?

CORBIN. (*Returning to table*) I wish you would.

DOCTOR. (*At decanter*) You noticed me stick to this stuff at dinner and refuse champagne?

CORBIN. Yes, I did.

DOCTOR. Champagne makes me nervous. Say when. (*Pours*)

CORBIN. There, thank you! (*Then quickly through megaphone*) "When!"

DOCTOR. (*Taking a high ball for himself*) Let's sit down.

CORBIN. Yes indeed.

DOCTOR. Eh?

CORBIN. (*With megaphone*) Of course—not a bit sleepy.

DOCTOR. (*Settled in his chair*) Great thing those megaphones. See in the papers that some fellow in Virginia's preaching through one of them.

CORBIN. Yes, I read that. (*Sits on the couch bed*)

DOCTOR. (*In leisurely gossip*) Simply an application of the old fireman's trumpet.

CORBIN. (*Easily*) Same idea.

DOCTOR. And the fireman's trumpet came from the huntsman's bugle and I suppose the huntsman's bugle was discovered by some idle boy blowing

through a ram's horn, way back in the tribal times. (*Pause*) That spectrumized wood—by jove, isn't that a pretty flame. (*As a bit of red light shows*)

CORBIN. Like a topaz and emerald blended.

DOCTOR. A chemist *makes* that nowaday's; but it was discovered by the fishermen that used to burn the drift wood of old boats, that had been covered with copper. (*Pause*) Whiskey! (*Holds up glass affectionately*) I'll wager that the first distillation of whiskey came from some neglected, and accidentally fermented, grain that the owner thought was a *total loss.*

CORBIN. Quite likely.

DOCTOR. Undoubtedly! That horse hair lariat hanging there—every plainsman has one to lay around him when he sleeps—somebody discovered by *accident,* that a snake won't cross a rope made of horse hair. I'm seventy two and I've really come to a state where I expect very little from elaborate preparation and am rather disappointed if the casual accident hasn't the kernel of a real benefit in it. Now *this*—(*Looks about*) You and I—the fire—all the small talk tucked into bed—you can't beat *this.*

CORBIN. (*In the "Camping out" mood*) I don't know where you can beat it.

DOCTOR. (*Smiles*) *Accident!* The *plan,* the plan was to tuck *me* in bed—and to have Mr. Klargess in your place.

CORBIN. I know.

DOCTOR. My profession—an accident.

CORBIN. You mean your being a doctor was accidental.

DOCTOR. No I was a physician and surgeon by intention; but my going over to Osteopathy. Ever tell you the story?

CORBIN. Never.

DOCTOR. I used to have in my stable a little black mare—a regular pet. Drove her on my morning

round—always finished by giving her a lump of sugar—One morning I went to buckle a fly net that had come loose at her breast; she expected the sugar—she had on blinders—and she turned her head suddenly and struck me right there. (*Indicates left ear. Pause*) I couldn't hear a sound for three years; and yet all the time I heard a roaring like Niagara. Did every thing—medicine—blisters—knife—no use—got a little funny up here too. (*Taps head*)

CORBIN. You mean mentally?

DOCTOR. Yes—they were taking me to California; some sanitarium—a bridge washed out on the old North Missouri railroad near a town called Kirksville. Had to lay over there one day. I never knew such heat—hundred and ten in the shade.

CORBIN. Whew! I wouldn't have gone in the shade.

DOCTOR. Commenced to get violent. Mrs. Rumsey was with me, and in her alarm she called in a doctor *there,* a long, slab sided fellow, in a linen duster. Two men were holding me by this time—the doctor felt round my skull, and neck a minute or two, then suddenly gave my head a wrench, and a crack, and I was a well man, like that. (*Snaps finger*)

CORBIN. What was it?

DOCTOR. Slight displacement of one of the vertabrae impinging on a nerve. Pressure gone, the trouble was gone.

CORBIN. But you're *still* hard of hearing?

DOCTOR. Only been so the last four years—I practiced medicine thirty years after that accident—but to finish my story, that same doctor later developed a new system of therapeutics, based on the theory that the bone structure of the human frame is the base of the health, or ill health. He opened a college, and I went to it. That accident to me, by my little black mare, made me an Osteopathist.

CORBIN. You say you were mentally deranged by the accident?

DOCTOR. For a time—(*Pause*) perhaps you think permanently.

CORBIN. Oh, no—but tell me—this wasn't the *skull* pressing on the brain.

DOCTOR. No—one of the cervical vertebrae pressing on a nerve.

CORBIN. (*Thoughtfully*) M'm.

DOCTOR. Why, my boy, I've seen chronic indigestion—*dyspepsia,* caused by a slight irregularity of *one* dorsal bone. And I've cured it by a snap of my thumb—a quick push of that particular vertebra into line.

CORBIN. By jove—(*Pause*) And a *mental derangement* corrected the same way?

DOCTOR. Mine was.

CORBIN. (*With increased interest*) *What* was it he did to you?

DOCTOR. I'll show you. (*Takes* CORBIN'S *head in hands*)

CORBIN. No thank you—the thing may work conversely.

DOCTOR. Well here we are. (*Takes manikin from wall* L. *and brings it to couch*) Here's Tom's manikin. This neck is articulated almost perfectly. He put me on the sleeping car bunk—so. (*Puts manikin on couch in the fire light only*) Then he moved my head—I *learned* all this *afterwards*——

CORBIN. Naturally——

DOCTOR. He moved my head to the limit one way—(*To manikin*) Pardon me, madam, no violence intended—(*Demonstrates to* CORBIN) then a slight pull and a jerk oppositely—so; and the thing was done.

CORBIN. Interesting! (*To manikin*) Feel better! (*In alarm to* DOCTOR) Why she can't speak.

DOCTOR. (*Stands under the mantel*) Still the operation was successful. Why, my boy, do you

know why the Japanese soldiers outmarch the world?

CORBIN. Rice?

DOCTOR. Rice—no—Osteopathy. A man tires because his muscle wearies—that muscle wearies because its particular vitalizing nerve is benumbed—that particular nerve is benumbed at its root, not at the terminus; and the root of the nerve is in the spine. Mister tired Jap lies down on his back, so. (*Again demonstrates with manikin*) A comrade takes his head and pulls it this way—his weight against it slowly, until the operator feels all the vertabrae slip under the pull like a string of beads, one by one. The pressure off the cartilage cushions in between—new blood rushes in—the nerves take new force—new life; and your Jap resumes and outmarches your Caucasian, by ten or twelve miles.

CORBIN. Well, why don't we Americans do that for one another?

DOCTOR. Too busy pulling the other extremity. (*Lifts the manikin's leg*)

(*The telephone rings.*)

CORBIN. There's the bell.

DOCTOR. Door bell?

CORBIN. Telephone I think.

DOCTOR. (*Shaking head and indicating his ears*) I can't answer it. (CORBIN *goes to 'phone. Filling drink*) If it's Tom, tell him to come home, and all will be forgiven.

CORBIN. (*At 'phone*) Mr. Bonner's house, yes. (*Pause*) No, I'm not Mr. Bonner. Do you wish to speak to Mr. Bonner personally. (*Pause*) Who am *I?* (*Pause*) Oh, I'm a *guest* of Mr. Bonner's—a guest. (*Pause*) Not at all sir—not a bit ashamed of it—my name is Corbin—Walter Corbin of—(*Pause. Change of tone*) Oh—Oh Mr. Leffiingwell—yes I believe she is—but—she's *re-*

tired—very well I'll call her. Beg pardon! (*Pause*) I meant that sir—I'll have the *maid* call her—(*Pause*) not at all—no, sir. (*Raps on dining room door*) Nora—Nora! (*Opens door, speaks into dining room*) Nora, will you go up to Mrs. Leffingwell's door; and say her husband's at the telephone.

NORA. (*Off*) Mrs. Leffingwell sir?

CORBIN. Yes, Mrs. Leffingwell.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Appearing on gallery from down stage door*) Is somebody calling me?

CORBIN. (*Backing from under gallery and looking up*) Oh—that you Mrs. Leffingwell?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Leaning over rail*) Yes—what is it?

CORBIN. Mr. Leffingwell, at the telephone. (*'Phone rings again*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Disconcerted*) Oh—well—what *is* it?

CORBIN. He wishes to speak to *you*.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. But I'm not dressed; ask him to wait.

CORBIN. Come as you are—I'll—the doctor and I'll go into *his* room. (*Goes to* DOCTOR)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Starting to stairs*) Oh thank you—I'm awfully sorry to trouble you.

CORBIN. (*With megaphone*) Mrs. Leffingwell wishes to use the telephone.

DOCTOR. What about it?

CORBIN. Not dressed. (*Throws megaphone on couch*)

DOCTOR. Oh! (*Exit with* CORBIN *into room* 1 R.)

(*'Phone rings.*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Descending stairs as quickly as peignoir and bedroom slippers permit*) Dear me—I'm coming—I'd give a body a minute.

MABEL. (*Appearing on gallery from other door*) Shouldn't some one answer that telephone? (*Peers down into fire lit studio*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. *I'm* answering it.

MABEL. Oh—you there Eva? Excuse me. (*Exit*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*At 'phone*) Hello—yes—yes—it's I. (*Pause*) Now wait a minute, Howard. Don't lose your temper. This is only a village and think of "Central" please. (*Pause*) No—no. I *didn't* know it—He *wasn't* invited. (*Pause*) Yes I asked *all* their names—now you can't think *that* when you were expected *yourself*. (*Pause. NORA enters during the pause and sleepily goes upstairs in her night-gown*) Now, Howard—Howard—not *over the 'phone,* please. (*Pause*) What! Why I was in another room—what? (*Pause*) well he was mistaken—nobody's retired—we're *all* here—Mrs. Bonner, Miss Ainslie—everybody—yes.

NORA. (*Rapping at* MRS. LEFFINGWELL'S *door*) Mrs. Leffingwell! (*Raps*) Mrs. Leffingwell!

MABEL. (*Appearing at her door*) What is it?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*At 'phone*) Why *should* you speak to them? Do you doubt *my word* Howard? (*Pause*) Well I'm *not* sitting up alone with him. (*Pause*)

NORA. Where's Mrs. Leffingwell?

MABEL. She's *there,* I think. (NORA *and* MABEL *advance to rail*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Oh Miss Ainslie—will you please come to the 'phone.

MABEL. I——

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Yes, please. (*In 'phone*) She's coming. (*To* MABEL *who is descending stairs in peignoir. In assumed indignation*) Mr. Leffingwell thinks that I am sitting up alone with—with the gentlemen. Won't you please say that *you* are here also. (*Then in whisper*) Don't say we had gone to bed.

(NORA *descends.*)

MABEL. (*At 'phone*) Good-evening—Ha ha!—(*In society manner*) Yes suppose it *is* morning—we missed you very much at dinner. (*Pause*) Who? Mrs. Bonner? (*Gaining time*) Why just at this moment——

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Interrupting and speaking loudly enough to affect 'phone*) Mrs. Bonner? Yes she's here—Here, Mrs. Bonner—speak to my foolish husband—Just say "I'm here"—(*Pushes* NORA *to 'phone*)

NORA. (*Mechanically at 'phone*) What! Who is it?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*In whisper and covering 'phone*) Just say—"I'm here".

NORA. I'm here—in *Mr. Bonner's* house—Mr. *Thomas* Bonner sir——

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Interrupting and pushing* NORA *away*) That will do. (*Takes 'phone*) I don't know. (*Pause. Speaks to* NORA) He says are you offended Eva? (NORA *looks about for* MRS. BONNER) No—she says she's not offended—but *I* am Howard—it's dreadfully stupid of you—what—(*Haughtily*) well I don't *know*—we shall sit up, as long as we feel entertained (*Pause. Begging*) Now Howard you mustn't—it's perfectly senseless of you—besides you can't leave the children—What! Well listen—(*Calls*) Howard! Howard! (*Then louder*) Howard!

NORA. (*Getting megaphone*) Take this mum.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*In despair*) He's gone.

NORA. (*Yelling through 'phone*) Howard!

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. No Nora—never mind.

(*Enter* MRS. BONNER, *excitedly by the door* 3 L. *She is also in peignoir and slippers; and the pastel colors of the three ladies' wraps have the accent of* NORA'S *white muslin nightie.*)

MRS. BONNER. What *is* the matter?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Howard has been telephoning and he's *coming over now.*

MRS. BONNER. Why?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. To be with *us.*

MRS. BONNER. Did you tell him we'd gone to bed?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. No I told him we were sitting up.

MRS. BONNER. Why did you tell him that? *Were* you? (*Looks about*)

MABEL. (*Quickly*) *I* wasn't.

NORA. *I* wasn't mam——

MRS. BONNER. Well who *were* sitting up?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Nobody was.

NORA. Yes mam—Mr. Corbin *was* and he asked me to call Mrs. Leffingwell for him.

MRS. BONNER. (*Mildly astonished*) Mr. Corbin asked you to call Mrs. Leffingwell?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. To the *telephone* Eva.

MRS. BONNER. Oh—well, I still don't understand it.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Howard doesn't like Mr. Corbin—and——

MABEL. Does he *know* him?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Yes I think he does.

MABEL. Mr. Corbin told me that he *didn't* know him.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Well, not intimately of course; but they've met—you see—they've met——

MRS. BONNER. But *you* hadn't met Mr. Corbin yourself?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Yes I'd—I'd *met* him.

MRS. BONNER. Singular you didn't say so when I introduced you this evening.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Disposed to cry*) Why I was nearly frozen Eva—I couldn't say *anything.*

MABEL. But Mr. Corbin wasn't frozen and he'd

already told me you were *not* acquainted.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Perhaps he'd forgotten it.

MABEL. Still your meeting again should have recalled the acquaintance.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Oh, it wasn't an acquaintance—It was just—just a casual meeting; and then Howard objected.

MABEL. Why?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. I don't know why—some—some stories or other and I promised Howard never to go any place where Mr. Corbin was to be—so there—I didn't want to say anything about it; but you all seem so—so surprised—that's all there is to it. But Howard's coming over; and I've told him we were all "sitting up" and—and I *do wish* you'd put something on and look as if you were "sitting up."

MRS. BONNER. But I don't see why you *told* him that.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. He asked me what you were doing, and I said *"that"*—is seemed the most innocent thing to tell him—and then I had to *stick* to it—when a man's jealous you've got to—to fib a little bit—and when a woman fibs—her women friends ought to stand by her—*I* think.

MRS. BONNER. Why of course we'll stand by you Cora! Light up the dining room, Nora; and put your bed in the pantry.

NORA. Yes'm. (*Exit to dining room*)

MABEL. (*Fatefully*) *Why jealous?*

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Accepting* MABEL'S *attitude*) Exactly. *Why?* But there you are—wait until you're married Miss Ainslie and you'll understand—please make haste and dress. (*Goes to stairway*)

MRS. BONNER. But Mr. Corbin should dress too, shouldn't he? That is I suppose he—he should.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Why of course he should—He answered the telephone and called me.

MRS. BONNER. Where is he?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. In your father's room.

MRS. BONNER. (*Rapping door* R.) Walter—Mr. Corbin—Oh, don't come out—(*Wraps her peignoir in sudden alarm*)

CORBIN. (*Off*) What is it?

MRS. BONNER. (*Through the closed door*) Mrs. Leffingwell wants us to dress; and sit up. Mr. Leffingwell's going to call, and Mrs. Leffingwell thinks—(*To* MRS. LEFFINGWELL) How should I explain it to *him.*

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Going up stairs*) Oh, he understands it. I'm sure.

MRS. BONNER. She says you understand it. She's sure! Do you?

CORBIN. (*Off*) Perfectly.

MABEL. (*Pricking up her ears*) What's he say?

MRS. BONNER. (*Dazed*) He says "perfectly."

MABEL. (*Haughtily*) Oh! Very remarkable—(*Speaks to the gallery where* MRS. LEFFINGWELL *now is*) *Where* did you say you *met* Mr. Corbin—Mrs Leffingwell?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. I don't think I mentioned the place—somewhere—but don't let us waste any more time. (*Exit to room*)

MABEL. (*Crossing to* MRS. BONNER *and speaking in haunted undertone*) Eva. That's the *woman herself.*

MRS. BONNER. Oh no, dear.

MABEL. (*In stabbing staccato*) Yes! They planned to be here together—Walter Corbin and she—*planned* it.

MRS. BONNER. Mabel how can you—they couldn't plan a blizzard—the worst—since Roscoe Conklin died.

MABEL. Wait. (*Goes to door* R.) Mr. Corbin—Walter! (*In a misleading purr*)

CORBIN. (*Opening door*) Yes.

MABEL. (*Shutting door*) *Don't come out.*

(*Pause*) Listen! Mrs. Leffingwell's gone to her room.

CORBIN. Yes.

MABEL. She says you and she have *met*—What was the *last* place at which you met?

CORBIN. Why—Bar Harbor, I think.

(*Small flare of green light.*)

MABEL. Thank you. (*In ghastly whisper toward* MRS. BONNER) Bar Harbor!

MRS. BONNER. (*Repeating in same sepulchral horror*) Bar Harbor!

MABEL. Bar Harbor. (*Throws herself on couch to weep, but strikes manikin*) Oh! (*Recoils*) Who's that?

MRS. BONNER. (*Alarmed*) What?

MABEL. There!

(MRS. BONNER *approaches in the fire light and screams.*)

CORBIN. (*Appearing in bath gown*) What *is* the matter?

MABEL. (*Cowering*) Go back—*go back* to your room.

(NORA *turns up light, in dining room, which shines brightly in.* MRS. LEFFINGWELL *alarmed appears on gallery; she is dressing.*)

MRS. BONNER. (*Waving* CORBIN *back in the sudden stream of* NORA'S *light*) Just a minute please. (CORBIN *exit. Both women glare at manikin.* MRS. BONNER *relaxes and sinks to model stand with weak laughter*)

MABEL. What is it?

MRS. BONNER. Tom's manikin.

MABEL. (*Joining the laugh until she gets a second thought*) Who's bed is that?

MRS. BONNER. Walter's—you heard me tell him he'd have to sleep in the studio.

(MRS. LEFFINGWELL *exit to her room.*)

MABEL. Why is that thing there if it's his bed?

MRS. BONNER. I don't know.

MABEL. Why have a *dummy?* Where was *he* going *himself?* (*Suddenly guessing. Pause—suspicion—certainty*) She told the truth Eva over the telephone. They *were* "sitting up"—On this night—just when I'd *forgiven* him everything. (*Weeps in big chair*)

MRS. BONNER. (*Comforting*) Impossible Mabel darling, impossible—a lady and gentleman wouldn't be "sitting up" in their night clothes.

MABEL. (*Tragically*) *Eva!* You're breaking my heart.

MRS. BONNER. Why?

MABEL. Don't tell me they weren't *sitting up.*

(*Bell rings.*)

MRS. BONNER. What's that?

MABEL. The bell.

MRS. BONNER. He's here then.

(*Enter* NORA *with an armful of bedding.*)

NORA. There's the bell ma'm.

MRS. BONNER. Yes Nora—It's Mr. Leffingwell. Put those things in the pantry and answer it.

NORA. Yes ma'm. (*Exit* L. 1)

MRS. BONNER. And we're not dressed yet.

MABEL. I don't mean to dress—I won't help her out in her lies. (*Goes to stairs*)

(*Bell rings again.* NORA *enters.*)

NORA. Where'll I fetch him ma'am. In here?

MRS. BONNER. (*Moving to dining room*) Oh no! Wait—(*Turns lights on in studio*) Yes in here—I'll go through the dining room.

NORA. Yes'm. (*Exit* 3 L.)

MABEL. Hurry Mabel; and dress.

MABEL. (*Resolutely on landing*) Dress! Never!

(*Exit* MRS. BONNER *to dining room where she turns out light. Enter* MRS. LEFFINGWELL *to the gallery.*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Was that the bell?

MABEL. (*Passing her*) Yes; your husband's at the door. Good-night! (*Exit to her room*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*On steps*) But Miss Ainslie—please—I told him we were "sitting up" (*Comes to landing*)

(*Enter* CORBIN, R. 1. *He has put on his clothes.*)

CORBIN. (*Quickly*) I'm afraid it's all my fault, Mrs. Leffingwell.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Coming to stage*) Oh please—Walter—we mustn't be sitting up alone. You and I—Go there. (*Into dining room*)

CORBIN. (*Crossing to the dining room*) Where are the others? (*Exit* 1 L.)

NORA. (*Off* 3 L.) Yes, sir, in here.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Oh! (*Quickly seizes manikin and with a sheet on it, leads it left and talks to it—rather than seem alone*) My dear Mrs. Rumsey, I'm so sorry you're ill.

(*Enter* NORA *and* BONNER 3 L.)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Rapping* 1 R.) Doctor—

Doctor! (*Opens door herself*) Mrs. Rumsey *really needs you.* (*Puts manikin off* R. 1 *and turns*) Oh! Mr. Bonner is it you?

BONNER. Yes—It's I—who's sick? (*To* NORA) Where's *Mrs.* Bonner?

NORA. There sir. (*Points to dining room*)

BONNER. There? (*Starts for dining room*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Oh, no!

(CORBIN *enters and meets* BONNER.)

BONNER. (*Pause*) Why hello Corbin!

CORBIN. Hello Tom.

NORA. (*Abjectly*) I didn't know *that,* sir. (*Exit to dining room*)

CORBIN. (*Embarrassed*) You're late old man aren't you?

BONNER. (*Severely*) Am I?

(*Enter* DOCTOR *with manikin* 1 R.)

DOCTOR. (*In upward inflection of banter*) Why do *I* have *this?*

BONNER. I give it up—why *do* you have it? (*To* MRS. LEFFINGWELL) Where's Eva?

(DOCTOR *puts manikin in chair.*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Gone to dress.

BONNER. To dress. Why? Has she been *un*-dressed?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. We all have.

BONNER. Oh! have you? Then I *am* late. What about Mr. Klargess?

DOCTOR. (*Pointing to* CORBIN) Those are Klargess' clothes.

BONNER. Are they? (*Looks about*) Where's Klargess himself. (*Goes out, turns up light in dining room and returns*)

CORBIN. Jim couldn't get here on account of the storm. He telephoned me to take his place and use his valise.

BONNER. Oh—well that's more encouraging. But don't let me interrupt the charade. (*Sees* MRS. LEFFINGWELL'S *boots on the fire logs*) What *is* this? Puss in Boots. (*Picks up boots*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Oh, those are mine. Who put—them there?

CORBIN. Mrs. Rumsey.

DOCTOR. (*Taking boots from* BONNER) They're not dry yet—better leave them. (*Restores boots to their places on the andirons*)

(*Knock at studio door up* R.)

BONNER. Who's that?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Anxiously*) That's Mr. Leffingwell. He's late too—Oh, I'm so glad you got here first, and *please* don't tell him we've been to bed.

BONNER. (*Stopping on way to door*) Tell him *what?*

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Mr. Corbin said we *had* and it mixed everything up terribly.

BONNER. I should think it might. (*Opens door*)

DRIVER. (*Outside*) Mr. Bonner's house.

BONNER. Yes.

DRIVER. Sorry to be so late but I've got half a gallon of ice cream for you. (*Disappears*)

BONNER. (*Closing door to shut out storm*) Ice cream? But we don't want ice cream now. (*Consults watch*) quarter past one.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Pleadingly*) Please take it—it will look so natural when Mr. Leffingwell gets here.

BONNER. What's Leffingwell coming for? Breakfast?

(*Enter* MRS. BONNER 3 L.)

MRS. BONNER. Oh Tom—I'm so glad you're home.

BONNER. (*Arm about her*) Are you? (*Aside*) Don't say why I went out—I *meant* to get back to your dinner really.

MRS. BONNER. And *he* wasn't even *here.*

BONNER. I know he wasn't.

(*Driver opens door and sets in small keg of ice cream packed in tin and ice.*)

MRS. BONNER. (*As draught strikes her*) Brr!

DRIVER. Here you are sir. I wouldn't a bothered you so late only I saw your light. Good night.

BONNER, DOCTOR, MRS. LEFFINGWELL, *and* CORBIN. Good-night.

(*Exit driver closing door.*)

MRS. BONNER. What is that?

BONNER. Your ice cream.

DOCTOR. (*To* CORBIN) Everything came but the ice cream and the guests.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Please get dressed, Doctor Rumsey.

BONNER. (*To* MRS. BONNER) Who *were* here?

MRS. BONNER. Only us and mother and father.

BONNER. Where was Mabel?

MRS. BONNER. Oh, *she* was here.

MRS. BONNER. Where is she now?

MRS. BONNER. Her room.

BONNER. Oh. (*Pause. His face saddens*)

MRS. BONNER. What *is* it?

BONNER. (*Cautiously*) Some bad news for her.

(*All attend.*)

MRS. BONNER. Bad news.
BONNER. Yes, poor girl; her father's dead.
CORBIN. (*Anxiously*) Mabel's father?

(BONNER *nods.*)

DOCTOR. *What* is it?
CORBIN. (*With megaphone*) Miss Ainslie's father; dead!
MRS. BONNER. (*Awed*) When did it happen?
BONNER. To-day—when I found—I—I couldn't get home, I went into the Bevin House for dinner. There I met Mabel's brother.
MRS. BONNER. Dick?
BONNER. Yes—he'd just had the telegram.
MRS. BONNER. (*Nodding*) What time was it?
BONNER. About half past eight.
MRS. BONNER. He was here at half past seven.
BONNER. Here?
MRS. BONNER. Yes—His telegram *then* said that *Mabel* was dead.
BONNER. Mabel dead. (MRS. BONNER *nods*) Well you told him she wasn't, didn't you?
MRS. BONNER. *She* told him she wasn't.
BONNER. Oh—what did he say?
MRS. BONNER. Seemed disappointed. I didn't hear their conversation, but I think the telegram was a ruse to borrow money from *you*.
BONNER. Oh—I see. Yes. (*Pause*) Well the old man's death cost me twenty-five.
MRS. BONNER. Well, there you are.
BONNER. Dick thought it was worth a hundred, but twenty-five was all I had with me.
MRS. BONNER. You know very well that Dick was the black sheep of that family.
BONNER. (*Getting crosspatch*) Yes I know—but even a black sheep might be in mourning.
MRS. BONNER. The telegram was a fraud.
BONNER. I'd have stayed at the Bevin House, only I thought somebody ought to break it gently to

the girl—well there's one blessing, he won't get out of here in this storm before I can get the police onto him. (*Rings 'phone*)

MRS. BONNER. Oh Tom—not Mabel's brother.

BONNER. Anybody's brother that does me for twenty five—the whole trouble is that people are too lenient—(*To 'phone*) Give me the chief of police, please.

MRS. BONNER. Tom!

CORBIN. (*Joining* MRS. BONNER'S *appeal*) I'll give you the twenty five myself Tom.

BONNER. 'Tisn't the twenty-five—it's the principle. (*To 'phone*) Chief of police? (*Pause*) Well get him—(*Pause*) Mr. Thomas Bonner.

CORBIN. Tom! you know the boy isn't just right here. (*Touches head*)

DOCTOR. (*Sharing the excitement*) What is it, Eva?

MRS. BONNER. Tom—now listen to me. You flew off the handle about Klargess when I only asked him here on Mabel's account, and you lost your dinner, and twenty five dollars.

BONNER. I'll get the twenty five back.

MRS. BONNER. Now don't be so unreasonable about this thing—sleep over it. (*'Phone rings*)

BONNER. Don't bother me. (*To 'phone*) Hello! (*Pause*) Yes, you'll do sergeant.

MRS. BONNER. Tom.

BONNER. (*Waving them off*) There's a fellow at the Bevin House that I want you to arrest.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Oh, I do wish he wouldn't.

BONNER. (*At 'phone*) Money under false pretences. (*Pause*) I will? (*Pause*) You have to have a warrant?

CORBIN. (*To others*) It's all right; He has to have a warrant.

BONNER. (*At 'phone*) Isn't my *word* good enough—(*Pause*) Nonsense I can't—Come down

there?—I've been two hours getting this far from the Bevin House. (*Pause*)

MRS. BONNER. Just like him—the most hot-headed, impulsive——

BONNER. All right—You have the officer here at six—I'll sign it, and I'll point the man out to him—(*Pause*) I don't care what you call him—John Doe will do, but his name's Ainslie. (*Pause*) Yes at six—all right. (*Hangs up 'phone*)

MRS. BONNER. Tom, if you'd only sleep over it.

BONNER. I've got to sleep over it, haven't I? They can't get a man here till six—so come on. Good-night, everybody.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Oh, don't go until Howard comes.

MRS. BONNER. He just started over as you came.

BONNER. Just started? Why he couldn't get here in a balloon. Go to bed everybody. (*Starts up the stairs*) Come on, Eva.

MRS. BONNER. (*Stopping him*) Oh, Tom—I had to put Mrs. Leffingwell in your room—*we're* in the blue room.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Going*) I'm so sorry.

BONNER. Not at all. Perfectly welcome. Where are *you,* Walter?

CORBIN. Here.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*On gallery*) Good-night.

CORBIN, BONNER *and* MRS. BONNER. Good-night.

BONNER. (*To* CORBIN) Good-night.

CORBIN. Good-night.

MRS. BONNER. Good-night.

CORBIN. Good-night, Mrs. Bonner.

(*Exit* BONNER *and* MRS. BONNER, 3 L.)

DOCTOR. (*Shaking head with the patient smile*) I didn't get it. What was it all about?

CORBIN. I'll turn out this light—may keep the others awake. (*Turns off light*)

DOCTOR. Yes.

CORBIN. (*With megaphone*) It was about Dick Ainslie—Miss Mabel's brother—sit down.

DOCTOR. (*Sitting on couch*) What about him?

CORBIN. Little bunco game.

DOCTOR. Oh!

CORBIN. He's been rather irregular in many ways since he was eighteen years old. Before that time he was the most straightforward boy you ever saw.

DOCTOR. Seventeen you say?

CORBIN. Eighteen.

DOCTOR. More unusual.

CORBIN. My class at college.

DOCTOR. Was eh?

CORBIN. Yes—your story about your black mare interested me. Especially the mental side of the injury.

DOCTOR. What about it?

CORBIN. Do you think an injury to the head or neck—if you will, could produce a *moral* derangement as well as a *mental* one?

DOCTOR. What *are* morals my boy but the expression of the interplay of nervous and intellectual forces?

CORBIN. You're getting beyond my depth now Doctor; but I wanted to ask you; could mental derangement, brought about by such an injury manifest itself in just, ordinary cussedness. Could it make a crook out of a boy that had rather leaned the other way before that?

DOCTOR. Easily. Medical literature's full of it.

CORBIN. Really?

DOCTOR. Really. (CORBIN *rises and walks with agitated introspection*) What's on your mind?

CORBIN. (*Returns and resumes megaphone*) This Ainslie boy had an injury of that kind just about that time.

DOCTOR. Did eh?

CORBIN. Yes, and I've always suspected, in a

way, that much of his waywardness might be traced to that injury.

DOCTOR. Been very wayward?

CORBIN. I couldn't begin to tell you.

DOCTOR. What's he done now?

CORBIN. Beat Tom out of twenty-five dollars—Tom's going to arrest him—but by jove I know the boy isn't responsible.

DOCTOR. I'd like to see him alone. Wonder if he'd submit to an examination.

CORBIN. Probably not. He generally does the exact opposite of what you request.

(*Enter* NORA *in great excitement,* 1 L.)

NORA. Mr. Corbin! Mr. Corbin!

CORBIN. Yes. Who is it?

NORA. It's me.

CORBIN. Oh, Nora?

NORA. Yes. Can I come in?

CORBIN. Yes. Doctor Rumsey's here.

NORA. There's somebody tryin' to get in the house.

CORBIN. Probably Mr. Leffingwell.

NORA. I don't think so. It's a man. He looked in the dining room window and tried the door.

CORBIN. Did he rap?

NORA. No, sir. Now he's gone around that way. (*The back*)

(CORBIN *goes to window.*)

DOCTOR. What is it?

(CORBIN *motions silence.*)

NORA. Shall I call Mr. Bonner?

CORBIN. No. Don't disturb anyone. (*Returns*)

Lie down Doctor, and be still. There's a prowler at the door here. (*Sound from door*) Go to your room Nora; and no lights.

NORA. I can't.

CORBIN. Why can't you?

NORA. The Butler's there.

CORBIN. You might send the Butler here. He's a husky looking chap.

NORA. Yes, sir.

CORBIN. Tell him what's going on; and no lights, remember.

NORA. Yes, sir. (*Exit*)

DOCTOR. (*Sitting up*) What is it?

CORBIN. Keep still—seem to be asleep. Here (*With manikin which has occupied the chair*) nobody be sitting up. (*Puts manikin to bed with* DOCTOR—*sheds his own coat and stands by door*)

DOCTOR. (*Lying beside the manikin*) You know I'm no great stickler for appearances, Corbin, (CORBIN *motions silence*) but this looks silly.

(*The back door opens*—DICK *enters cautiously.* CORBIN *is behind the door.* DICK *is fascinated by the sleeping couple; the* DOCTOR *and the manikin. He closes door and approaches* DOCTOR *cautiously.*)

DOCTOR. (*Resuming*) It looks silly—Suppose anybody could see the three of us now. (*Half rises*)

DICK. (*With gun pointed at the* DOCTOR) Keep still.

DOCTOR. (*Not liking it, at all*) See here, my man.

DICK. (*In hoarse whisper*) I don't want to hurt anybody, and I won't if you don't move.

(CORBIN *grabs* DICK *from behind and a struggle*

ensues.)

CORBIN. Lend a hand, Doctor, quick!

(*Gun is discharged.* DOCTOR *joins in struggle, women scream in their rooms.* DICK *is overpowered and thrown on the couch.*)

CORBIN. Give me that lariat. (DOCTOR *gives lariat and he and* CORBIN *tie* DICK)

DICK. (*Struggling*) Damn you, Corbin! Damn you!

CORBIN. It's Dick.

DICK. Yes, it's Dick and you can't bluff me when I've once started. (MRS. LEFFINGWELL *appears*) *I'll* swear that Mrs. Leffingwell was in your room.

CORBIN. Shut up.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Oh! Oh!

DICK. (*Shouting*) Swear it in any court in the world—I'll get even with you—and Mrs. Leffingwell's husband believes it. (*Laughs*)

CORBIN. Stop! Give me a towel, or something, to gag him.

DICK. (*Laughing*) Ha, ha, Mrs. Leffingwell's husband——

(DOCTOR *hands* CORBIN *one of* MRS. LEFFINGWELL'S *silk boots.* CORBIN *proceeds to gag* DICK *with the boot and a handkerchief.* MABEL *starts to come onto gallery.*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Holding* MABEL'S *door*) No, no, Miss Ainslie; please stay in your room.

CORBIN. (*With megaphone, to* DOCTOR) It's Miss Ainslie's brother—we mustn't let the girl know—can't we take him somewhere? Your room Doctor.

(*Enter* NORA 1 L.)

NORA. The butler's comin' sir.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*To* MABEL) No, no—you can't come out—you can't.

CORBIN. Nora, help Mrs. Leffingwell up there.

NORA. Yes, sir. (*Runs up stairs*)

(*Enter* BUTLER *by dining room; he is in shirt sleeves with suspenders hanging.*)

BUTLER. Anybody hurt?

CORBIN. Not seriously. Lend a hand here, will you? This man, in that room.

BUTLER. Yes, sir. (CORBIN *and* BUTLER *put* DICK *in* DOCTOR'S *room* 1 R., *as* DOCTOR *opens door*)

NORA. Burglars! Burglars!

CORBIN. (*Exit with* DICK *and* BUTLER) All right, Mrs. Leffingwell. Open the door.

(DOCTOR *follows.* MABEL *appears on gallery.*)

MABEL. Why do you hold my door?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. The men were fighting a burglar—you might be shot, my dear.

CORBIN. (*Re-entering quickly*) It's all over—all over—please go to your rooms ladies.

MABEL. But what is the man.

(CORBIN *turns up light,* MRS. LEFFINGWELL *and* MABEL *in bedroom attire, scream wildly and disappear. Re-enter* DOCTOR, NORA *descends.*)

NORA. Shall I call the master, sir?

CORBIN. No, tell him and Mrs. Bonner it's all quiet again.

NORA. Yes, sir.

(*Enter* BONNER *in pajamas* 3 L.)

BONNER. Who's shot?

NORA. A burglar.

CORBIN. It's all right, Tom. We've got him in there—tied and gagged.

BONNER. Is he shot?

CORBIN. No.

BONNER. We heard the gun, but Eva held me. You're sure no one's hurt?

CORBIN. Perfectly.

BONNER. I'll tell her no one's hurt and come back. Nora go to Mrs. Rumsey, and Willy—he's yelling his head off.

NORA. Yes, sir. (*Exit* 3 L.)

BONNER. I want a look at him. Wow! what is that odor?

CORBIN. Nora's liniment. (BONNER *exit* 3 L.) They mustn't see him Doctor. Tom'd give him to the police.

DOCTOR. That's so—why you're hurt, my boy, there's blood on your hand.

CORBIN. Just the fleshy part—the arm—the bullet grazed me.

DOCTOR. Let me see it.

CORBIN. There isn't time. (*Enter* BUTLER 1 R.) Here butler, that burglar's a friend of mine.

BUTLER. A friend, sir.

CORBIN. (*Bringing him down persuasively*) Yes. Nobody must see him for a few hours anyway. I want you to take his place.

BUTLER. Take his place?

CORBIN. (*Getting rope from the* DOCTOR'S *dressing gown*) Yes. I'll tie you and you can keep still.

BUTLER. (*Retreating*) No, sir!

CORBIN. (*Following insistently*) There's twenty dollars in it, for you.

BUTLER. No, sir, I'm no burglar.

CORBIN. (*Turning out light*) For two hours only—half an hour.

BUTLER. No, sir—my character's something to me.

CORBIN. (*Bringing him down*) Your character'll be safe I tell you (*Gets the other boot*) but he's that young lady's brother. (*Points to* MABEL'S *door*) Her *brother.*

BUTLER. Nothing to me, sir.

CORBIN. You're an idiot.

BUTLER. Perhaps I am sir, but I'm innocent.

BONNER. (*Off* 3 L.) Now let's have a look at him. (CORBIN *grabs the* BUTLER *putting* MRS. LEFFINGWELL'S *boot over his face. The* DOCTOR *assists in a low tackle from the other side.* (*Enter* BONNER) Corbin—Walter—what's the row?

CORBIN. He's getting away again. Tom, he's getting away.

BONNER. (*Aiding the* DOCTOR *and* CORBIN) Hang to him. Now back with him—I've got him all right.

(MABEL *and* MRS. LEFFINGWELL *appear on the gallery, in peignoirs. The men throw the* BUTLER *to the couch.*)

MABEL. Oh, gentlemen—gentlemen, what *is* the matter?

BONNER. There! (*As they finish with the prostrate* BUTLER)

(*Enter* MRS. BONNER 3 L. *Also in peignoir.*)

MRS. BONNER. Tom! Tom!

BONNER. He just got loose again, that's all. (*Turns up light*)

MRS. BONNER. Oh, don't let me see him. Don't let me see him.

MABEL. (*Calling*) Eva!

MRS. BONNER. You poor dear, are you all safe? (*Runs up the stairs and joins the frightened women*)

(*Enter* MOTHER 3 L.)

MABEL *and* MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*In hysterical unison*) Yes, Eva dear, yes. (*They huddle*)

MOTHER. Henry! Where's Henry? (MOTHER *runs to* DOCTOR'S *door*)

(*Enter* NORA 3 L. DOCTOR *interposes so that* MOTHER *can't enter his room where* DICK *is.*)

BONNER. (*Returning to couch*) Why I know that scoundrel. I hire him sometimes for the pantry.

NORA. Oh, no, sir. That isn't the burglar, Mr. Corbin.

CORBIN. (*Interrupting*) Don't get excited Nora. The man isn't strong enough for that medicine—go to your room. (*He puts her out into the dining room*)

(*The telephone rings.*)

NORA. (*Outside*) Oh, Mrs. Bonner! Mrs. Bonner!

(CORBIN *shuts dining room door.*)

MRS. BONNER. (*On the gallery*) Tom! What is it? Nora!

CORBIN. (*At 'phone*) Hello! (*The three ladies in peignoirs kneel and crane over the rail to listen.* DOCTOR *is keeping mother from his room*) Oh, *Damn* Leffingwell!

(*The ladies exclaim in unison and recoil.* CORBIN *meets* NORA, *who is re-entering and puts her out.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE:—*Same as* ACT II—*The Studio.*

TIME:—*Near daybreak*

Outside the blizzard has turned into an ice storm. The tree tops are crystal.

The moon shines until the dawn effects appear.

DISCOVERED:—CORBIN *in his street clothes again: reefer,—the* DOCTOR *in dressing gown. The* BUTLER *lies gagged on the couch.*

CORBIN. (*Occasionally pausing to swing his arms for warmth*) See here my man—It's six o'clock. In half an hour the sun will be up—If you'd have listened to reason you could have had that gag out of your mouth four hours ago. (*Swings arms*)

DOCTOR. Tell him that without knowing it, he's helped accomplish a great deal of good.

CORBIN. (*By megaphone*) I don't have to tell him—he hears *you.* (*Swings again*)

DOCTOR. Of course he does—But one forms the habit of thinking a dumb man must also be deaf.

CORBIN. That's only a gag. (*To* BUTLER) Nobody's hurt you—you know; and nobody's going to—you've had the only warm cover there was. When it comes to a showdown I'll take all the blame on myself and there'll be no charge against you, whatever—provided, you behave yourself.

DICK. (*In* DOCTOR'S *room*) Help—help—(CORBIN *rises and motions* DOCTOR *to go*) Let me out of here—Mabel—Mabel——

DOCTOR. (*Going*) Hollering again.
CORBIN. Yes. (*Motions* DOCTOR *to gag him*)

(*Exit* DOCTOR, I R.)

DICK. (*Off*) Mabel—Mabel—Help! (*His voice is smothered*)
CORBIN. (*Pause. To* BUTLER) If you were in that poor boy's place you'd have some reason to kick. (BUTLER *tries to draw up his knees*) *I* know you can't—but *you* know what I mean.

(*Enter* MABEL *on balcony—she has her sealskin over her wrapper.*)

MABEL. Who called?
CORBIN. The Burglar.
MABEL. But he called "Mabel, Mabel."
CORBIN. Yes—(*To* BUTLER) The lady's name is Miss Ainslie.

(NORA *opens dining room door.*)

MABEL. It sounded like my brother's voice.
CORBIN. A dream will color one's impression.
MABEL. I don't think I was asleep.
CORBIN. I'll try not to let him do it again.

(*Exit* MABEL.)

NORA. Somebody called "Help."
CORBIN. He didn't mean you, Nora.
NORA. How's Mr. Orton, sir?
CORBIN. Mr. Orton's doing something for me.
NORA. (*Points to couch*) Ain't that Mr. Orton, sir?
CORBIN. This is the burglar—go back to bed.
NORA. It's comin' daylight, isn't it? What time is it, please?

CORBIN. Six o'clock—that is still the moonlight.

NORA. Six o'clock—I must be gettin' up sir—that call for help raised me standing. (*Starts off*)

CORBIN. You shouldn't mistake a call, Nora, for a raise—see here——

NORA. (*Stopping*) Yes, sir——

CORBIN. What's the matter with the furnace—that register has icicles on it.

NORA. It's the coachman's fault, sir. The coachman tends to the furnace.

CORBIN. You mean he doesn't attend to it.

NORA. Him and Mr. Orton had all the leavin's in the wine glasses last night—and I expect he forgot the furnace.

CORBIN. Well see if you can't find some wood for this fireplace, then.

NORA. There's only plain wood, sir—they ain't any more of that rainbow stuff.

CORBIN. Plain wood'll do.

NORA. Yes, sir. (*Goes*)

(*Enter* DOCTOR.)

DOCTOR. I hated to tie him again——

(*Enter* BONNER, 3 L. *He is in pajamas, and slippers.*)

BONNER. Who was that shouting?

CORBIN. Our burglar.

(BUTLER *wriggles.*)

BONNER. Did he get loose?

CORBIN. Only his mouth——

BONNER. (*In astonishment*) You're dressed, aren't you?

CORBIN. I couldn't sleep—hurt my arm a little

in our first scrap—I fear I've kept the Doctor up too.

BONNER. I'll get dressed myself, and be with you—Gee whiz, this place is cold.

CORBIN. The coachman's a little overtrained socially, and he forgot the furnace.

BONNER. Can you run one of them?

CORBIN. Coachman?

BONNER. No! furnace? (CORBIN *swinging his arms, shakes his head "no"*) *Eva* understands the thing—but hang it; it doesn't seem conjugal to make a wife get out of a warm bed to fire up a furnace?

CORBIN. No.

BONNER. (*Casting about. Pause*) I'll bet that fellow could do it, if he wasn't tied.

CORBIN. Mustn't put ourselves under obligations to *him*.

BONNER. I suppose not.

DOCTOR. What is it?

CORBIN. The coachman may have got rid of *his* tide by this time.

BONNER. The wire to the stable is down. His bell doesn't ring. (*Takes megaphone—goes to back door*)

DOCTOR. What's the matter?

CORBIN. (*Megaphoning with hands*) Coachman!

DOCTOR. (*Correcting him—pointing to* BUTLER) Butler——

BONNER. (*Who has opened door at which wind howls*) Holy smoke, the blizzard has changed into an ice storm. (*He calls thro' the megaphone leaning from door to do so*) John—John—(*An avalanche from the roof hits the megaphone and him—He returns closing the door*)

CORBIN. Never mind—the maid is fetching some wood for this place.

BONNER. (*Disgusted*) You know we spent last winter at Palm Beach—Eva didn't like it there—

she said she thought it was too effeminate, not to have the children get a real winter. (*Digs the snow from his neck*)

CORBIN. 'Tis good discipline.

BONNER. Don't think discipline's what I need. (*To* DOCTOR) Did you ever light up that furnace down stairs?

DOCTOR. (*Positively*) No.

BONNER. (*Getting into ulster*) Well I'll try it. (*Exit* 3 L.)

CORBIN. (*Watching* BONNER *out*) Your last chance, my man—if you'll go gently about your business I'll untie you. Now I'm going to remove this gag—there.

BUTLER. (*Speaking not loudly*) I know *you*. You're a rich man and I'll make you pay for this. I'll have the law——

CORBIN. Don't get me frightened about the law, Orton, or I'll make you do time for housebreakin'.

BUTLER. Why you know that I'm as innocent as that image—you might as well tie and gag that.

CORBIN. I will; thank you for the suggestion, Orton—and you shall help me. Here's a twenty dollar bill for your night's work.

BUTLER. That's nothin' to me, sir—Mr. Bonner thinks I'm a crook.

CORBIN. I'll tell Mr. Bonner you're not a crook.

BUTLER. How'll I *know* you will?

CORBIN. You'll hear me, and you'll know I *have*.

DOCTOR. (*As* BUTLER *sits up*) Is it all right?

CORBIN. It will be I think.

BUTLER. Why didn't you tell him *then?*

CORBIN. Because that lad isn't ready—Doctor Rumsey isn't through working on him—When I produce the real burglar I want him to look his best—Now don't be an ass, Orton. Take this twenty and keep still.

BUTLER. I'll take the twenty, sir, but that don't end it.

DOCTOR. (*Seeing* BUTLER *take money*) Good—(*To* CORBIN) You know I've reduced that swelling till it's hardly noticeable.

CORBIN. You think that's the cause of it?

DOCTOR. It's sufficient—Distinct dislocation of the axis also—My bed's placed so awkwardly I can't get at him for the pull I want, and I'm too fat to work on the floor. If we could bring this thing in there——

CORBIN. Bring your man here.

DOCTOR. Very well.

CORBIN. Orton and I will do it—you tie and gag this obstreperous party. (*Indicates manikin*) Come, Orton.

DOCTOR. Let him walk—there are two of *you.* (*Picks up manikin*)

BUTLER. (*Pointing at* DICK'S *door*) Why *I* ain't even sure *that* man's a burglar.

CORBIN. Neither am I—(*Exit with* BUTLER, I R.)

DOCTOR. Gad if he gets very ugly, there are four of us—(*Puts rope about manikin*) This is the third man I've overpowered to-night; and they seem to get easier. (*Throws rug over manikin as* NORA *enters*)

NORA. (*With kindling wood*) Ain't that Mr. Orton, Doctor?

DOCTOR. No.

NORA. (*Putting kindling in fireplace*) Mr. Bonner just told me it was.

DOCTOR. Don't strike a match with that liniment on you, Nora—It's volatile, I'll do that. (*Takes matches from her at fireplace*)

NORA. I'll bring the *wood,* sir. (*Goes. Passing the manikin. In whisper*) Mr. Orton! (*Pause*) Mr. Orton—if it is you—move your feet. (*Pause*) Mr. Orton—(*Pause*) move anything.

DOCTOR. (*Turning*) Zut—(*In a scat whisper*)

NORA. (*Jumping up*) Oh—Oh, how you frightened me, Doctor. (*Exit* 1 L.)

(*Re-enter* CORBIN *with* DICK *walking, but otherwise tied and followed by* BUTLER.)

CORBIN. Now Dick, I've untied your feet. (DOCTOR *moves manikin to window seat—back of piano.* DICK *regards the proceeding with alarm*) That's only a dummy we have passed off for you—I've untied your feet, and I'll take that pad off your mouth in a few minutes—Doctor Rumsey's your friend. You remember a hard lump on the back of your neck, don't you? I'm going to release this one hand and let you feel for yourself—but don't try to fight with it, because we've six hands here to your one—there! (*The* DOCTOR *has joined group.* DICK *feels his own neck*) It's gone. (DICK *looks at* DOCTOR *who nods*) That lump has been dissipated by Doctor Rumsey in the two hours' manipulation you've had to-night. There's still something more to do—tell him what you want, Doctor.

DOCTOR. I want you to lie on this couch, Dick, and let yourself perfectly relax. Untie the other hand——

(CORBIN *does so.* DICK *lies down. Enter* NORA *with big wood.*)

NORA. I don't want to doubt your word, Mister Corbin—but——

CORBIN. (*Interrupted*) What is it?

NORA. But if I was sure that wasn't Mr. Orton—

CORBIN. Well, look at him (*Indicates* DICK) besides *this* is Mr. Orton. (*Points to* BUTLER *standing the other side of couch*)

BUTLER. What is it?

NORA. Oh—so it is—excuse me.

CORBIN. Now run away, Nora.

NORA. Yes, sir—(*To* BUTLER) There was a bug in it.

(DICK *sits up at the reference to the bug.*)

DOCTOR. Lie down, my boy——

CORBIN. Run away, Nora.

NORA. I'm so unhappy, sir—I unscrewed the faucet and I'll show him the bug if he'll only come, sir.

(DICK *rises again, haunted.*)

CORBIN. (*Pushing* DICK *down*) Go look at her bug, Orton, and help the girl get us a cup of coffee.

BUTLER. Yes, sir.

CORBIN. And remember—(*Finger on lips*) nothing till I tell it.

BUTLER. Yes, sir.

NORA. (*To* CORBIN) Thank you, sir. (*Exit*)

BUTLER. (*In doorway*) Of course you know, sir, I'm here just temporary.

CORBIN. (*Sadly*) Orton—we all are.

(*Exit* BUTLER.)

DOCTOR. (*To* DICK) Now I'm going to move your head a little; and pull on it a good deal—I don't think it'll hurt you my boy—I'll have to have that handkerchief away.

CORBIN. (*Removing bandage*) Don't holler Dick—your sister Mabel's in that room.

DOCTOR. Steady—(*Pulls*) Steady—relax my lad—don't resist me with the muscles—(*Moves head slowly, then pulls, and then gives quick side pressure.* DICK *gives slight grunt.* DOCTOR *taking his hands away with the air of a job finished*) That's all—you've been pretty seriously ill for the past six years,

my boy, but it's over—suppose you sit up. (DICK *sits up*) How do you feel?

DICK. Sleepy.

CORBIN. (*With megaphone*) He says sleepy.

DOCTOR. Any different around here? (*Indicates own head*)

DICK. Seems like an iron band had gone.

CORBIN. (*Relaying through megaphone*) Like an iron band had gone——

DOCTOR. It has practically; same kind of pressure.

DICK. So sleepy——

CORBIN. (*Repeating*) Sleepy——

DOCTOR. Well, come into *my* room and sleep—just what you need.

(DICK *rises.*)

DICK. (*Turning*) Say Walter—one minute—I could go to sleep, only there's a note that I endorsed—comes due this morning at the Lincoln Bank—for a hundred dollars.

CORBIN. Yes?

DICK. I can't pay it.

CORBIN. That's all right, Dick—I'll telephone them to take care of it.

DICK. Will you? Thanks—and say, Walter—I—I put *your name* on it—rotten thing to do—don't know why I did it.

CORBIN. Never mind—go lie down.

DOCTOR. (*As they go*) If you're ever hanged, my boy, it'll only be about double that pressure, that you used to have there. The whole weight of your head pressing one bone onto a nerve—(*Exit with* DICK)

(*Enter* NORA *and* BUTLER.)

NORA. Mr. Corbin——

(CORBIN *turns.*)

CORBIN. Well, Nora?

NORA. Where's the burglar?

CORBIN. There—(*Points to window seat where the manikin lies*) Don't you see him—what about the coffee?

BUTLER. I don't know, sir.

NORA. The cook won't let *me* come into the kitchen, sir. She says the smell of this liniment before breakfast makes her wobbley——

CORBIN. (*Getting the odor*) 'M—far be it from me to dispute with an expert. (*To* BUTLER) *You* go.

BUTLER. (*Slowly shaking head*) Oh, no, sir—my department's only the pantry——

CORBIN. Well, can't you waive rank this once and go into the kitchen?

BUTLER. Besides she's a very disagreeable party—the cook.

CORBIN. Well, you're here "just temporary."

BUTLER. That's so, sir—but then—(*Pauses*)

CORBIN. What?

BUTLER. The dinner last night didn't go off to her liking—she says the kitchen and not the pantry has the right to the heel taps, and she's still pretty hot in the collar, sir.

CORBIN. (*Getting the freezer of ice cream*) You give her this, with my compliments.

BUTLER. What is it?

CORBIN. Half a gallon of ice cream. If the worst comes to the worst, put some in her collar.

BUTLER. (*Smiling*) Oh—*she'll* do that, sir. (*Indicates throat. Exit* BUTLER)

NORA. Is it *all* for the cook, Mr. Corbin, please?

CORBIN. (*Quickly, and calling*) Orton!—Hold out *one* quart for the pantry.

NORA. (*Going*) Thank you, sir.

CORBIN. And Nora—perhaps you won't even be

needed in the dining room—as long as you're running that naphtha auxiliary——

NORA. Beg pardon, sir.

CORBIN. I want you to sit up here—(*Goes up to window*) and guard the burglar. That liniment won't upset him. Here's a pistol——

NORA. Oh, I never could hold a pistol, sir——

CORBIN. Sh—he won't know—not him—take a candle—(*Gives her a candle*) just pretend—There's a brave girl—sit here—(*Addresses dummy*) Now, sir, if you move hand or foot—this young woman has my orders to shoot. Go closer, Nora.

NORA. Oh, no, sir—perhaps this liniment does smell before breakfast. You see Cook says it makes her wobbley.

CORBIN. No matter—shoot him if he wobbles.

(*Enter* LEFFINGWELL *by dining room.*)

LEFFINGWELL. (*In good winter make up—High arctics and fur cap*) Well, sir——

CORBIN. Good-morning.

LEFFINGWELL. Put down that revolver.

CORBIN. Pardon me, I'd forgotten it. (*Puts gun down*)

LEFFINGWELL. Where is my wife?

CORBIN. (*Nodding*) In that room on the gallery.

LEFFINGWELL. (*Ascending steps and regarding couch*) Who slept there?

CORBIN. Nobody.

LEFFINGWELL. (*Pausing on landing*) Somebody's *bed*——

CORBIN. Yes.

LEFFINGWELL. (*To* NORA) Whose was it?

NORA. Mr. Corbin's, sir.

LEFFINGWELL. Then *why* didn't you sleep in it?

(*Enter* BUTLER *with fountain faucet.*)

BUTLER. There *was* a bug in it, sir.

LEFFINGWELL. (*Seeing faucet, loudly*) Put up that revolver.

BUTLER. This?

LEFFINGWELL. Yes, that!

BUTLER. It's only a water pipe, sir.

CORBIN. Get the coffee, Orton.

(*Exit* BUTLER.)

LEFFINGWELL. Where *did* you sleep?

CORBIN. I haven't slept—I sat up.

LEFFINGWELL. Alone?

CORBIN. No, not quite.

LEFFINGWELL. I had your solemn promise never to be where *she* was again.

CORBIN. I'm willing to renew it.

LEFFINGWELL. *Renew* it?

CORBIN. Indefinitely.

LEFFINGWELL. And my faith—my shattered belief in *her*—can you renew that?

CORBIN. I think I can.

LEFFINGWELL. I'll give you the chance. (*Raps savagely at* MABEL'S *door*) Open this door.

CORBIN. (*To foot of stairs*) Here—don't pound on that door.

LEFFINGWELL. (*Leaning over rail*) You keep still—I'll kick the door *in* if I want to; and if you come up there I'll kick you in the face. (*As* CORBIN *starts up*)

CORBIN. (*On lower steps*) Your wife's not there.

LEFFINGWELL. Then why is the door locked? (*Pounds on door*)

MABEL. (*Calling*) Who's there?

LEFFINGWELL. You know damned well who's here—open the door.

CORBIN. (*Going up stairs*) You're a crazy man —stop I——

LEFFINGWELL. Open it. (MABEL *opens door*) Oh—Oh, Miss Ainslie——

MABEL. Mr. Leffingwell, I believe.

LEFFINGWELL. Yes, I beg your pardon—I'm looking for Mrs. Leffingwell.

MABEL. Then kick in that door. (*Descends to stage*)

NORA. You can get in the window, sir.

CORBIN. (*To* NORA) You watch your man, Nora.

NORA. Yes, sir.

(CORBIN *tries to talk with* MABEL.)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Appearing*) Howard, this is outrageous.

LEFFINGWELL. I agree with you madame.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. I didn't expect you at this hour. We sat up for you until Mr. Bonner came.

LEFFINGWELL. Wasn't Bonner here?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. No——

LEFFINGWELL. (*Quickly over rail to* CORBIN) See here *you*——

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Howard, I want to speak to you privately.

LEFFINGWELL. No! why aren't you dressed?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. I haven't had time—I don't get up at six o'clock in the winter.

LEFFINGWELL. Well, get your clothes on—you're going out of here at once.

(*Exit* MRS. LEFFINGWELL.)

MABEL. (*Repulsing* CORBIN) No, *that* is the woman. You *planned* to meet her here.

CORBIN. Mabel! How can you?

MABEL. (*Savagely*) *Isn't* she?

CORBIN. I won't answer that.

MABEL. (*Turning*) Mr. Leffingwell?

LEFFINGWELL. (*Also turning on gallery*) Miss Ainslie. (*He starts downstairs*)

CORBIN. (*Interrupting*) No!—not with the servants in hearing.

MABEL. Nora, you may go to the kitchen.

NORA. I can't mam—Cook says I make her wobbly.

(LEFFINGWELL *reaches stage.*)

MABEL. Then go to your own room—or wait in the hall.

NORA. (*Flourishing the candle*) But I'm watchin' the burglar, miss.

MABEL. What for? besides your candle isn't even lighted.

NORA. (*Chagrined*) Please don't, miss. *He* thinks it's a pistol.

MABEL. Does he?

CORBIN. You may go, Nora.

NORA. Thank you, sir—(*Starts off*) Oh, here, sir. (*Gives* CORBIN *the candle*)

CORBIN. Thank you. (*Throws candle on couch*)

LEFFINGWELL. (*To* MABEL) Did that maid say "a burglar?"

MABEL. Yes—he's there—the gentlemen caught him last night.

LEFFINGWELL. Oh. (*Starts casually up*)

CORBIN. (*Interfering*) I don't think you'd better disturb him.

LEFFINGWELL. (*Gruffly*) I only mean to *look* at him.

CORBIN. I'd rather you wouldn't *look* at him.

LEFFINGWELL. What have *you* got to do with it?

CORBIN. (*Nodding back at dummy*) My burglar—that's all.

LEFFINGWELL. Aren't you taking unusual pains to make yourself disagreeable.

CORBIN. Perhaps.

LEFFINGWELL. (*Under his breath; through the teeth*) Sush—(*Turns away*)

MABEL. Mr. Leffingwell; your wife said last night that you'd asked her to promise not to be any place where Mr. Corbin was.

LEFFINGWELL. Well?

MABEL. Why?

LEFFINGWELL. Personal matter.

MABEL. Between whom?

LEFFINGWELL. Him and me.

MABEL. Of what nature?

LEFFINGWELL. (*Pause*) Quarrel.

MABEL. About what?

LEFFINGWELL. I don't care to say. (*Turns away*)

MABEL. But one question more—was it at Bar Harbor?

LEFFINGWELL. (*Turning sharply. Pause—looking from* MABEL *to* CORBIN *and back to* MABEL *again*) Why do you suggest Bar Harbor?

MABEL. Mr. Corbin was in trouble there because of another man's wife. Was it your wife?

LEFFINGWELL. I can't discuss the matter.

MABEL. I'm sure it *was* your wife.

LEFFINGWELL. You have no reason for that assumption.

MABEL. *That* woman's husband kicked in the door of Mr. Corbin's room in the hotel—your first impulse *here* was to kick in the doors—It *must* have been you—you're door *kicker*.

LEFFINGWELL. If you've decided the matter for yourself—why question me further?

MABEL. I must be more sure.

LEFFINGWELL. Why should it be *your* affair at all? You're a stranger to me, Miss Ainslie—you never met my *wife* until last night.

MABEL. I ask the question because I have been engaged to marry Mr. Corbin—I forgave that affair

at Bar Harbor, although he refused to confess *all* of it.

CORBIN. Now Mabel——

MABEL. (*Continuing*) But I won't forgive this second rendezvous, and if you've the spirit of a man, you won't. *Was* your wife the woman? (*Pause*) You might as well answer truthfully because I shall know she was, even if you deny it. (*Pause*) Answer me.

LEFFINGWELL. (*Pause*) Miss Ainslee—I wouldn't marry that man if he were the last person on earth.

MABEL. That is my affair, Mr. Leffingwell. What I ask of *you* is a positive answer to my question.

LEFFINGWELL. I can't answer such a question in the presence of strangers. I *won't.*

MABEL. (*Indicating* CORBIN) He's no *stranger*—

LEFFINGWELL. (*Indicates burglar*) No, but the other one is.

MABEL. Then answer me *this*—let us assume for the sake of Mr. Corbin's burglar that your wife was not that woman—you forbade her seeing Mr. Corbin "*again*" didn't you?

LEFFINGWELL. I didn't say "*again.*" I said "*ever.*"

MABEL. (*Asserting*) Because of that Bar Harbor trouble.

LEFFINGWELL. Yes.

MABEL. *You* thought him *guilty,* didn't you?

CORBIN. Oh, see here Mabel——

MABEL. I'm not speaking to you—(*To* LEFFINGWELL) They were her boots, weren't they?

LEFFINGWELL. Yes!—That is they were the boots of the woman in question.

MABEL. Beyond a doubt?

LEFFINGWELL. Beyond a doubt.

MABEL. Did she admit it?

LEFFINGWELL. Yes.

MABEL. And when you broke into his room yo thought *she* was *there,* didn't you?

LEFFINGWELL. I didn't say it was I who brok into his room.

MABEL. It must have been you.

LEFFINGWELL. Why must?

MABEL. What *other* man would have done it o account of *your* wife?

LEFFINGWELL. I didn't say it *was* my wife.

MABEL. But you made them *both* promise neve to meet each other, didn't you?

LEFFINGWELL. Yes!— *no! That is*—everybod in the hotel did the same thing—why should *an* man's wife meet *him?*

MABEL. (*In growing excitement*) Then they *al* believed him guilty?

LEFFINGWELL. Of course.

MABEL. Oh—Oh——

(*Enter* MRS. LEFFINGWELL.)

CORBIN. Mabel, is this fair?

MABEL. (*Moving away*) Don't speak to me.

CORBIN. (*Following*) What *one* new fact has all this tirade developed? What has it added to everything that I told you last night?

LEFFINGWELL. (*Angrily*) *What* did you tell her last night—what have *you* dared to tell anybody?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Interposing*) Howard dear!

LEFFINGWELL. (*To* MRS. LEFFINGWELL) Be still.

CORBIN. You trusted me then—what have you learned since then? *What?* in Heaven's name——

MABEL. (*Triumphantly*) I've found out the woman.

CORBIN. Let's *assume* that you have——

MABEL. Assume!

CORBIN. With our friend there—(*Indicates burglar, manikin*) assuming that you have "found out the woman"—Does a *lie* about me and some unknown woman become a *truth* because the woman is identified? Be fair—think.

MABEL. (*Suddenly judicious*) Yes—I will be fair!—I see your point. (*To* LEFFINGWELL) You and the other husbands in the hotel had some further evidence against Mr. Corbin than—than simply Mrs. Leffingwell's boots on the fire escape.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Oh, Howard you told *her.*

LEFFINGWELL. I did not. (*To* MABEL) Did I?

MABEL. (*To* MRS. LEFFINGWELL) No—But *you* do—Oh, you creature.

LEFFINGWELL. (*Indignantly interposing*) I beg your pardon——

MABEL. (*Turning from* MRS. LEFFINGWELL *to* CORBIN) To pretend you didn't know each other and then come together *here.* Oh! Oh!

CORBIN. My being here is an accident, Mabel.

MABEL. No, a special Providence—a revelation in time to save *me;* and you couldn't speak of it in the presence of strangers—(*Turns to burglar with gradually increasing voice*) Here *you* burglar—you've heard all this—if there's any doubt remaining in *your* mind, you may know now that the woman in the Bar Harbor Hotel with Mr. Corbin was a Mrs. Howard Leffingwell of Larchmont. (*Sinks overcome on couch*)

LEFFINGWELL. (*Speaking on cue of* "MRS.") Stop—stop I say—(*To burglar—slowly and leaning across piano*) See here my man—I've spent a good deal of money already keeping this thing out of the papers—It won't do *you,* any good to talk about what you've heard here—and if you're anything of a gentleman you won't—On the other hand, it may be worth your while to keep still about it.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Also addressing the silent witness*) *I* wish to say now, what I said then, and

shall *always* say: The whole thing was a tissue of lies—Walter Corbin is a perfectly honorable gentleman—I am a perfectly loyal wife.

CORBIN. (*To* MABEL) Are you fair?

MABEL. I will be—(*To* LEFFINGWELL) I repeat my question to you—there was plenty of other evidence?

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. A tissue of lies.

LEFFINGWELL. The statements of a private detective. This man had no answer except that the detective was *crazy*—I gave him every chance to disprove the detective but when he even declined to *meet* the man, I was forced to consider him—to consider the case—I was forced to do just as I did.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Howard dear.

LEFFINGWELL. (*Turning to his wife*) Be still. (*Turns back to* CORBIN)

(*Enter* BONNER—*His face is black with soot. He carries a furnace shaker.*)

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Turns from* LEFFINGWELL *with a groan*) Oh—(*Confronts* BONNER—*screams*) Ow!

LEFFINGWELL. What. (*Turns to his wife—sees* BONNER) Put up that revolver.

BONNER. Hello, Leffingwell.

MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Mr. Bonner!

BONNER. I've been fixing the furnace. I understand all of it, but this—(*Shows shaker to* CORBIN)

CORBIN. That's the key—turns the grate upside down.

BONNER. Thank you—(*To others*) But—what's the matter?

LEFFINGWELL. This *man's* the matter—I don't allow my wife where he is.

BONNER. Oh, come now, Leffingwell—that's a little *too* strong, isn't it?

LEFFINGWELL. No, sir——

BONNER. He calls *here—my* wife sees him.
LEFFINGWELL. Well mine *can't.*
BONNER. Why?—I insist on knowing.

(*Enter* MRS. BONNER.)

MRS. BONNER. Tom!—what is that screaming?
BONNER. See here my dear—you better—Hang it, Leffingwell, you've got to explain this thing. Come in the dining room, my love. You'll excuse us, Mr. Corbin, won't you?
CORBIN. Certainly.
LEFFINGWELL. (*To* MRS. LEFFINGWELL) Come —(*Sternly. Then to* MRS. BONNER) I *didn't* offend you Mrs. Bonner when you telephoned me at midnight?
MRS. BONNER. (*Stops on her way to the dining room*) I didn't telephone you at midnight.
LEFFINGWELL. Not when my wife asked you to?
MRS. BONNER. You didn't ask me to telephone at midnight?
MRS. LEFFINGWELL. (*Lying*) Why don't you remember?—Come Howard.

(LEFFINGWELL *follows to dining room.*)

BONNER. (*In door*) And Mabel—had she better——

(*Exit* LEFFINGWELL *and* MRS. LEFFINGWELL.)

MRS. BONNER. Oh, let me alone Tom. (*Exit*)
BONNER. (*Magnificently to* CORBIN) I had to call that, you know.
CORBIN. Of course.

(*Exit* BONNER.)

MABEL. Why didn't you face the detective?

CORBIN. Why should I?—the man was crazy—crazy with that excessive cunning that the insane often develop.

MABEL. Couldn't that have been proven?

CORBIN. Yes.

MABEL. Then why didn't you *prove* it?

CORBIN. (*Pause*) I thought it best to wait.

MABEL. Under *that* accusation?

CORBIN. Yes.

MABEL. It was your duty to the community to *expose* such a man—to have him taken into custody—it was your duty to *yourself*.

CORBIN. I thought more of my duty to *you*.

MABEL. To me?—I don't believe you, Walter. Your duty to me was to have had the man arrested.

CORBIN. He was mentally unsound.

MABEL. What of it? (*Pause*) You see your story's unbelievable, don't you?—you evade the issues constantly.

CORBIN. The man—was—Dick.

MABEL. Dick? (CORBIN *nods*) What, Dick?

CORBIN. Dick Ainslie.

MABEL. Oh—(*Pause*) The private detective?

CORBIN. Yes. He called himself by another name—but—I was sure any investigation would have brought out his own name. I couldn't do that—even tho' you punished my silence by breaking our engagement.

MABEL. My brother—(CORBIN *nods*) You said—mentally unsound?

CORBIN. Yes—Hasn't yur family apprehended it at times?

MABEL. The family! (*Pause*) You thought the family was—(*Horrified pause*) you think there may be something in the Ainslie blood——

CORBIN. (*Quickly*) Oh, no——

MABEL. I see—you—you *wished* the engagement broken. (*Cries on piano*)

CORBIN. (*Leaning over her*) Mabel—you can't think that—why should I wish it renewed?
MABEL. (*Turning*) I don't believe you do.
CORBIN. I swear it.

(*Enter* LEFFINGWELL.)

LEFFINGWELL. Miss Ainslie, I answered some questions for *you*—now let me ask some—when you telephoned me at midnight, were you *sitting up?*
MABEL. I was *standing,* at the 'phone.

(*Enter* MRS. LEFFINGWELL.)

LEFFINGWELL. Had you been to bed?
MABEL. Yes.
LEFFINGWELL. Oh!
MRS. LEFFINGWELL. Now Howard that's all very unimportant.
LEFFINGWELL. No lie is unimportant—who was sitting up besides my wife?
MABEL. As far as I knew only Mr. Corbin.
LEFFINGWELL. (*Threateningly to* CORBIN) Yes!

(*Enter* NORA *and* A SERGEANT OF POLICE, 3 L.)

NORA. Where's Mr. Bonner?

(*Enter* MRS. BONNER, 1 L.)

MRS. BONNER. What is it, Nora?
NORA. A policeman.

(*Enter* BONNER, 1 L.)

SERGEANT. Morning, Mr. Bonner.
BONNER. Good-morning, Sergeant.
SERGEANT. I've got that warrant with me.
NORA. (*Indicating dummy*) Here's the man Mr.

Bonner. I watched him nearly an hour by myself.

SERGEANT. (*To* BONNER) *You* got him?

BONNER. That's a fellow who broke in here last night.

SERGEANT. (*Regarding the manikin*) Did you have to tie him?

BONNER. I should say so; and took three of us to do it. He shot Mr. Corbin there, in the arm.

SERGEANT. Where's the gun? (CORBIN *points to it.* SERGEANT *picks it up*) Cheap bull dog—(*To Dummy*) Get up.

CORBIN. I don't think he can.

(*The women huddle to one side.* LEFFINGWELL *and* BONNER *go to dummy.*)

SERGEANT. (*Removing hat from dummy*) Say—(*Turns*) What is this, Mr. Bonner?

BONNER. That?—why that's my lay figure.

SERGEANT. This is a pretty cold morning, Mr. Bonner, to wade up here just for a josh.

BONNER. Well, the fellow's gone, that's all—who did it?

CORBIN. Nora was watching him.

(*All turn accusingly to* NORA.)

NORA. But Miss Ainslie sent me away, didn't you?

(*They turn to* MABEL.)

MABEL. Yes, but both Mr. Corbin and myself have been here ever since—Mr. Leffingwell, too.

SERGEANT. Be a fine grind on me around Larchmont; comin' here before daylight to get a stuffy.

BONNER. That isn't why I sent for you, Sergeant.

SERGEANT. I thought not—I've got a warrant for John Doe—confidence game.

BONNER. Yes, I'll sign it and tell you where to go for *that* man. This way sergeant. (*Exit followed by sergeant to hall* 3 L.)

MRS. BONNER. Now Tom dear—(*Follows*)

NORA. Honest, Mr. Corbin, I never took my eyes off of him only when Mr. Leffingwell was tryin' to get in Miss Ainslie's room.

CORBIN. Of course not—you may go, Nora.

NORA. Yes, sir. (*Exit* 1 L.)

LEFFINGWELL. No wonder you didn't want me to look at that man, eh?

MABEL. Did you know?

CORBIN. Yes, I knew.

MABEL. Isn't there *anything* honest about you?

LEFFINGWELL. You may take these things triflingly, my man—but if you do, you don't know what the word "home" means. You've destroyed my trust in this woman for ever and that destruction works backward as well as into the future. The very joy I've had in listening to my babies' voices you've dulled by the doubt on her.

CORBIN. Not my work believe me.

(*Enter* BONNER *and* MRS. BONNER.)

BONNER. (*With magisterial expansion*) Now let's sift this thing——

LEFFINGWELL. (*Savagely*) Begin there—(*Points at* CORBIN) There! The greatest grand stand bluff of the century.

BONNER. I left the man in your care.

CORBIN. Yes.

BONNER. I'd identified him, hadn't I, as a fellow that sometimes does pantry work in the house and—

CORBIN. Yes—but that was a mistake.

(*Enter* BUTLER *carrying coffee in cup.*)

BONNER. Mistake nothing.

BUTLER. Here, sir, is a——

(BONNER *tackles* BUTLER *with swift underhold and "back-heels" him onto the model stand. The women scream.*)

BONNER. You got away, did you?

BUTLER. Mr. Corbin——

CORBIN. Hold on Tom—that man's all right—there's a mistake.

BONNER. (*Retaining his hold*) You had him tied, didn't you?

CORBIN. Yes, but——

BONNER. And he shot you through the arm?

CORBIN. No.

BONNER. You said so.

CORBIN. Not this man—another one—Orton consented to take this place as a prisoner—Orton's a perfectly honest man for all I know.

(BONNER *reluctantly releases* BUTLER *who re-adjusts his "dickey" shirt-bosom in panting dignity.*)

BONNER. Then where is the man?

CORBIN. There. (*Points* R.)

BONNER. The Doctor's room.

CORBIN. (BONNER *starts to door*) Yes—wait a minute. (*Interposes just at the door, the knob of which rattles*)

LEFFINGWELL. (*Throwing up his hands*) You bet whenever it comes to a show down, Mister *Fixit* wants to shift the cut.

BONNER. (*Pugnaciously*) Why wait——

CORBIN. Because the man in there is not a burglar.

LEFFINGWELL. (*Disgustedly to* BONNER) He'll ring in substitutes all winter.

BONNER. What is he then?

CORBIN. He's a poor unfortunate boy that didn't know what he was doing.

(*Enter* DOCTOR.)

BONNER. (*Excitedly*) Now he's alone, isn't he?
CORBIN. Yes.
DOCTOR. What is it Walter?
BONNER. (*Shouting*) Is that fellow tied?
DOCTOR. No.

(BONNER *rushes to the door.*)

CORBIN. (*Stopping* BONNER) One moment, Tom.
LEFFINGWELL. It's your house, Bonner, isn't it?
MRS. BONNER. (*Aside*) As a matter of fact, it's mine.
BONNER. Now let's *see* him anyway.
CORBIN. In a moment. I want you to all take seats and——
BONNER. Take seats——
CORBIN. Yes, *take seats*——
LEFFINGWELL. (*As he sits*) And then some gentleman kindly lend him two hard boiled eggs and a silk hat.
BONNER. What is this, Corbin?
CORBIN. I don't want you to jump at him Tom, like you did at Orton there—and Orton you may leave the room.
BUTLER. Yes, sir.
LEFFINGWELL. (*Rising*) It's a con game, Bonner—there goes the real man.
BONNER. Wait——

(BUTLER *pauses.*)

CORBIN. Nonsense—Go on, Orton.

(BUTLER *goes.* LEFFINGWELL *shrugs his shoulders in resignation.*)

CORBIN. We—all know the man in this room.

MRS. BONNER. *All* of us?

CORBIN. All—when I bring him in here, he must be received as a friend—(*To* DOCTOR) He's awake?

DOCTOR. Yes.

CORBIN. *You* get him.

(DOCTOR *exit.*)

BONNER. Why all this mystery? Who is it?

CORBIN. A classmate of mine—he's pursued *me* rather relentlessly for several years because he was suffering under a mental aberration.

LEFFINGWELL. (*With a derisive burst*) Oh, *another* crazy man.

CORBIN. (*Quickly*) No!—the same one.

MABEL. Walter—(*Goes anxiously to* CORBIN)

CORBIN. It's all right—(MABEL *goes to* MRS. BONNER *whispering* "DICK.") He knows that you are all here—I've had several talks with him during the night, and I only ask of you that you seem as easy and natural as possible, and treat him as a friend.

(*Enter* DOCTOR *and* DICK.)

DICK. (*Very much subdued*) Good-morning.

OMNES. Good-morning——

CORBIN. Dick called on me last night and I insisted on his staying.

BONNER. That was right.

DICK. Oh, Mr. Bonner—I—oh—I—that little matter at the Beven House was—that was a mistake—I'll explain if I may this morning.

BONNER. Take your own time.

CORBIN. You know Mr. and Mrs. Leffingwell?

DICK. Yes.

CORBIN. (*To* DICK) I'm afraid *their* little matter can't be dismissed so lightly. Dick perpetrated a rather serious practical joke on me at Bar Harbor—I don't think any explanation will do Dick but the real one—which is that at times for the last six years, Dick hasn't been quite himself mentally.

DICK. I didn't like to admit it, but Doctor Rumsey says it wasn't my fault. (*To* DOCTOR) You tell them.

DOCTOR. A partial dislocation of the axis caused by a blow—I reduced a morbid contusion there last night that was pressing on an important nerve center—Constant cerebral irritation—I'm sure it'll all be right in a few weeks. (*Turns paternally to* DICK)

LEFFINGWELL. You mean to say all those reports to me at Bar Harbor were wrong?

DICK. Yes, wrong—it seemed kind of a game I was playing, with Corbin——

LEFFINGWELL. And my wife's boots?

DICK. I put 'em there—I don't know why I did it, but I did.

MABEL. I'm sure he doesn't—If you only knew the unhappiness he's given the family in the last six years, and before that he was such a good boy—such a *good* boy.

DOCTOR. Just a blow *there* in a school boy fight—about a ball game, wasn't it?

DICK. Yes.

LEFFINGWELL. (*To* CORBIN) Well you've been a rather patient sufferer, Mr. Corbin—I must say.

MABEL. Yes. (*Goes sympathetically to* CORBIN)

CORBIN. Oh, please don't—no—no sympathy to me I beg.

BONNER. Why not?

CORBIN. Because *I* struck that blow. (*Goes to* DICK)

CURTAIN.